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COMPTON AUDLEY.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

COMPTON AUDLEY;

OR,

HANDS NOT HEARTS.

BY LORD WILLIAM LENNOX.

The hands of old gave hearts;
But our new heraldry is — hands not hearts.

SHAKSPEARE.

Un tel hymen est l'enfer de ce monde.

VOLTAIRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.



COMPTON AUDLEY.

CHAPTER I.

MEETING AT ST. PAUL'S.

To Thee, to Thee,
On this appointed day shall thanks ascend,
That Thou hast brought our warfare to an end.
Oh, 'tis a goodly Ordinance! the sight,
Though sprung from bleeding war, is one of pure delight.
Bless thou the hour, or ere the hour arrive,
When a whole people shall kneel down in prayer,
And at one moment, in one spirit strive,
With lip and heart, to tell their gratitude
For thy protecting care,
Their solemn joy, praising the Eternal Lord
For tyranny subdued,
And for the sway of equity renewed,
For liberty confirmed, and peace restored.

WORDSWORTH.

THE day appointed for the thanksgiving
at St. Paul's for the restoration of the bless-

ings of peace, opened with a bright summer morning, in the month of July, 1814. Already the bells were loudly ringing from the numerous steeples of the city; various corps of military, with “olive branch and laurel crown,” lined the streets, through which the expected procession was to pass, while the thunder of the cannon, reverberating at intervals, through the streets and squares of the mighty metropolis, announced its approach to the cathedral. At length the grand solemnity began. Every voice was, for the moment, silenced. The holy liturgy was chanted; and to the throng of beating human hearts, with all their secret scrolls of buried grief, were given the treasures of immortal hope.

“ Hark ! how the flood
Of the rich organ harmony bears up
Their voice on its high waves.”

The inspired anthem of praise now echoed

through the lofty aisles of the Christian temple; the full, deep, swelling tones of the organ went forth in murmured thunder; the hymns which Miriam sang and David tuned, the respondent chant and service, the inspiring, sacred hallelujahs filled the vast pile; and, as the concluding benediction was given, all eyes were turned upon one man;—upon him, the hero of a hundred fields, who never advanced but to cover his arms with glory, and who never retreated but to eclipse the very glory of his advance: who, upon the banks of the Douro and the Tagus, of the Ebro and Garonne, had won the hearts of nations; whose generous and lofty spirit inspired his troops with unbounded confidence, and taught them that the day of battle was ever the day of victory! whose name will remain an imperishable monument, exciting others to aim at like deeds of patriotism; whose campaigns were sanctified by the cause, were sullied by no

cruelties, no crimes; the chariot wheels of whose triumphs were followed by no curses, and who upon his death-bed might remember his victories among his good works.

The memory of the contests, the sight of those who had survived the destruction of the battle field, associated as all was with the duties of religious worship, was well calculated to inspire the purest feeling of veneration, and produce an influence on the mind, approaching to sublimity. A spirit of holiness cast over every soul a glow of patriotism, and the service of the nation's thanksgiving was, on this great occasion, performed with a oneness of sentiment and feeling, perhaps hitherto unparalleled. The ceremony was rendered still more intensely effective by the presence of the conqueror of conquerors, who, at the distance of a hundred years, revived the glories of a Marlborough, and outwent the expectations of the people who confided in his strength.

The service ended, the gathered multitude again went forth, yet pressing, clinging and struggling still around the church; "for" to use the good language of Southey "the people would not be debarred from gazing till the last moment upon the Hero, the darling Hero of England." A temporary lull now prevailed; the crowd drew simultaneously back, and the Duke of Wellington came forth to thrill the one heart of the people, whose battles he had fought. Meanwhile, the various bands of music struck up the inspiring air, "See the conquering hero comes!" handkerchiefs waved, and shouts, cries, and huzzas, burst upon the ear from all quarters. Screams and laughter were intermingled in the general *mélée*, but the pulse of joy which throbbed in the great breast of a nation might be heard as it sometimes is in a single human breast.

In the midst of this maddening confusion a young officer was endeavouring to thread his

way, when the words “Dudley; Mr. Ravensworth!” pronounced by a voice he could not mistake, suddenly attracted his attention, and on looking round he perceived the beautiful Constance Graham separated from her party, and struggling amidst the crowd which thronged the space near to which the carriages of the company were drawn up.

It was their first meeting, it may be here observed, after a long separation; and in a few moments her young lover, in spite of all the many obstacles that stood in his way, was at her side. He had much to say, and amongst other things, many enquiries to make respecting both her family and herself; but at this moment, Lady Margaret Graham’s carriage was announced, and by a very fortunate combination of circumstances exactly at the instant when Dudley Ravensworth, and the fair Constance happened to rejoin that lady and her friends.

"Constance!" said Lady Margaret, "where have you been? I have been looking for you for the last quarter of an hour. Oh! Mr. Ravensworth, how kind you are! and now, since I have leisure to ask, pray where are you to be heard of?"

"We shall meet to-morrow at White's ball," said Dudley; who, probably, considered the present time too short for a more explicit explanation, with regard to his movements.

"I regret," returned Lady Margaret, with a most gracious smile, and pausing before the steps of the carriage, "that we cannot obtain tickets; our particular friend, Lady Mary Somerton, is at present out of town, and several others are so much dispersed at this time, that I fear we must be contented to be absentees."

"How unfortunate!" said Dudley, addressing the observation, however, more to himself than to Lady Margaret; "but possibly Lady

Margaret might allow me to exert my influence in the matter?—I know the committee well," he added in some confusion, for he knew not exactly how his offer might—for various causes afterwards to be explained—he received : Lady Margaret, however, very frankly accepted his proffered services, and it was agreed that he should call at Grosvenor Square next day, in order to report progress.

" We dine in Portland Place at the Strathconnels'," said Lady Margaret, following her daughter into the carriage, " and in case you should receive the tickets late you will find us there;" and having thus spoken, Lady Margaret and her fair charge were whirled off to that place, which no other place is said to be like—" Home."

The morning came,—four, five, six o'clock, and Dudley did not, as he himself had promised, appear. Constance, however, did not despair, though her mother vented her anger

in sundry apothegms and observations which went to prove that all young men, and Dudley Ravensworth amongst them, were flighty, idle, sincere only for the moment, and totally and irreclaimably forgetful of both duty and promises. In fine, half-past seven arrived, and the carriage was at the door. As it stopped before the mansion of the Strathconnels' a gentle tap at the window attracted the attention of Constance, and on looking round she beheld Dudley by her side on horseback, with the tickets for White's ball in his hand. Constance's scarcely suppressed exclamation of thanks—her look of joyful surprise, the brilliant smile of pleasure that beamed on her countenance, more than repaid Dudley for the trouble he had undergone. He had just time to put the much envied tickets into Constance's hands when another carriage drove up.

"I dine with Spencer at the Albany," said Dudley, addressing Lady Margaret; "if I can

be of any service in escorting you, command me." But to this arrangement, Lady Margaret, influenced it may be by her own principles of returning prudence, demurred. They should *meet, at any rate*, she merely observed, and Mr. Ravensworth must give himself no further trouble upon their account.

This celebrated ball, the most brilliant, perhaps of any other assembly of the season, quite realised the expectations of Constance. She was herself in excellent spirits. The company, distinguished as it was, was numerous ; yet not too much so. Dudley Ravensworth was a partner in the dance very much to her mind ; nor need we add, that he had long since obtained that degree of interest in her heart which makes memory and hope sisters in joy.

During the drive home, Lady Margaret took care to express how *very much* she disapproved of the manner in which Constance wasted her time on a *detrimental*, as she called

all younger brothers. Mr. Ravensworth she allowed was very well to dance with, once or so during the evening; but to *devote* herself to him was, to say the least of it, very injudicious. It was unprofitable, fruitless; and had not Constance unconsciously dropped during the long *mentorian* harangue into a kind of slumber, the happy pleasures of the evening were likely to have ended in many painful and perplexing reflections.

It is now time, however, to introduce more particularly to our readers the party who had thus accidentally encountered the young *militaire* on the day appointed for the general thanksgiving at St. Paul's. The family of Sir Alexander and Lady Margaret Graham consisted of an only child, Constance Graham. Lady Margaret herself, descended from a dynasty of antediluvian lords, which boasted itself uncontaminated by the mixture of plebeian blood, was the daughter of a Scotch Earl, poor

and proud—a common alliance; and having been disappointed in her first love, had descended to attach herself to the *semi-nobility* of a baronet. Imperious in manner, with a proud and commanding spirit, she possessed a *pedigree mania* to an alarming extent. Rigid and censorious in her judgment of others; wholly destitute of feeling, and exquisitely precise in all the forms of life (never having herself swerved the millionth fraction of an inch from the rectilinear routine of exact propriety); selfish and narrow-minded, her charity was entirely passive, consisting of a few expressions of surprise and sympathy. She had contrived even from her childhood to have her own way; in a word, she had governed her parents, her relations, her husband, and now exercised a strict and uncompromising discipline over her daughter. Her discourse was peremptory, her gait ungainly, and she drew out the thread of her verbosity finer than the staple of her

argument. Her ambition had been to reign as a star of fashion, and she had attained that eminence by banishing all traces of heart from her proceedings, and by keeping aloof from every one, whether bound by the ties of blood or gratitude, that was not admitted into the exclusive circle of fashionable life.

Lady Margaret was a most expert chaperon ; her tactics in a ball-room were pre-eminently conspicuous. She had the art of walking the room so as to shun all bores and detrimentals,—only fit to call carriages, and get boas and shawls, and to encounter (by chance) all the *eligibles*. She was ever ready with excuses of "headaches," "uneven floors," "heat of rooms," "carriage called," "sprained ankle," or any other impromptu afflictions, when a younger son presumed to ask Constance to dance.

Sir Alexander himself was one of those good kind of every-day men, of which genus we have more in the world than of any other.

He was good-tempered, till fretted—liberal, till forced to calculate his income with reference to his expenses; good-hearted, open, and hospitable to those with whom he wished to be well; and very cold—absolutely frigid towards those with whom, like Orlando, he desired to “be better strangers.” In short, Sir Alexander Graham was one of the common lot; though for the honour of humanity, he had ever proved himself a most excellent husband, and a most affectionate, as well as at all times a very exemplary father.

Graham castle was an old Norman fortress, occupying the summit of a gently rising ground in the middle of an extensive range of pasture ground or chace. The outward fortifications, together with a majestic river encircling it on the west and north, had made it, according to the mode of warfare then in use, an almost impregnable place of strength. It was encompassed by a high wall, six feet in thick-

ness, and several hundred yards in length, embattled and strengthened at intervals with lofty square towers, defended by loop-holes, and by rows of machiolations for pouring down melted lead and scalding water on the heads of assailants.

Within these walls was placed, after the Norman manner of building castles, the habitation of the owner and his warrior retainers; the doors opening upon, and the windows looking into, the court. One side descended in a gradual slope to the river which ran beneath, and this side had formerly been doubly defended, not only by the outward walls, which now however no longer existed, but by those of the castle, strengthened in the centre by the keep, a large square tower of hewn stonework, of immense and gigantic height, and which still remained to this our modern day in nearly its original state, though tenanted chiefly by the twilight bat and the ominous

owl. The stones of the old battlements which had withstood the assault of hosts, were now rent and rifted by the warfare of ages.

" And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save by the crannyng wind,
Or holding dark communion with the cloud.
There was a day when they were young and proud,
Banners on high, and battles passed below ;
But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust ere now ;
And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow."

Considerable repairs, however, had been made to the other parts of the edifice, by the grandfather of Sir Alexander. The dilapidated walls, and other decayed portions, were new-faced or rebuilt from the foundation ; and, amongst other improvements, a marble fountain had been erected in the centre of the quadrangle, while the massive stone-mullioned casements, which scarcely admitted the light,

had been succeeded by sash windows of plate glass. Still, however, the castle, with its walls and towers, hoary with the lichens of age, and its elaborate case-work of sculptured free-stone, preserved much of its ancient appearance of stern magnificence and feudal grandeur. The interior, too, still retained much of its original character.

The large hall, some seventy feet long by about thirty feet broad, panelled with dark wainscot, was furnished with several rows of long oak tables and benches. Over the carved doors, surmounted with heavy entablatures, were displayed some spoils of the chase, or the battle of days gone by. Over some branched the stately antlers of the red deer, and over others grinned the wolf's head: the walls were hung round with suits of ancient armour, faded waving banners, shields, and lances,—the accoutrements of its former martial possessors.—Whichever way you

turned, helm, hauberk, and twisted-mail, spear, rapier, musket, pike, and morion, broad-sword, and target, frowned upon you. Some had seen goodly service: one sword bore witness to Palestine, by the inscription on its blade — “A CRUCE SALUS, 1196. EFFINGHAM GRAHAM:” — for Sir Alexander’s ancestors had fought side by side with their sovereigns, in the wars of the Crusades, — of the white and red roses, or led their vassals at Agincourt, Cressy, Poictiers, and Bosworth. Some had suffered with the martyred Charles in the battles of Edgehill, Stratton, Lansdown, and Naseby. That kneeling figure, representing the soldier and the saint, whose blood had purpled the dark field of Marston Moor, brought back the patriot Hampden, and all the horrors of that unhappy war. Others had triumphed with the son of Charles, the merry Monarch. All testified that Gra-

ham Castle had borne the stern brunt of ruthless war; that its "donjon keep" had heard the laments of many a solitary prisoner; that many an open deed of blood had been perpetrated in its halls.

The dark tapestried apartments, with their mythological and scriptural histories, wrought by the fingers of high-born dames; — their huge hearths, — the tall-backed, carved, oaken chairs, — antique ebony cabinets, set upon legs that resembled scrolls, and huge, mis-shapen, heavy chests, — rich velvet hangings, — fretted cornices, — cedar panellings, — old family portraits of ancient knights, and their ladye loves, primly dressed in starched ruff, jewelled stomacher, and high-heeled shoes, seemed starting from their canvass, and would make the gazer fancy himself in the courts of eld, taking him back to those days of love and chivalry, of festivity and magnificence, to

the age of early minstrelsy and song, and feudal hospitality, when its courts and halls were thronged with gallant knights and their retainers, fair dames, merry minstrels, and sandalled pilgrims. All these helped to realise the idea, that the present occupants of the Castle still wandered over its apartments before their time, and kept their revels in its chambers at least some two or three centuries before their appointed hour.

Dudley Ravensworth had passed much of his time at Graham Castle. He could not follow, with his eye, a long series of family portraits,—he could not hear recounted the history of the tapestry rooms,—where the warlike adventures of some of the earliest ancestors of the Grahams were wrought into action by the fair hands of their ladies,—nor listen to the traditions which explained the various symbols of their ar-

morial badges, nor view the antique weapons, with which they fought, nor the tattered banners which they had purchased with their blood,— without imbibing something like the spirit of those times. He felt sensations amounting to enthusiasm, for a family of such antiquity ; and his imagination bore him, against the stream of time, back to the days of chivalry and song.

The lofty oriels, with their florid fretwork, even yet decorated with curiously painted glass, quaintly fashioned, and their colours blending through age into a dim and dusky brown, represented legends, armorial bearings, and inscriptions ; while the figures of grim and rugged warriors frowned from the painted casements, which otherwise had presented to the view a fair expanse of lawn and shrubbery, opening upon wild tracts of rough forest land, overrun with fern, and broken into dell and valley ; bright water glancing in the fore-

ground, mountains with their fantastic outlines bounding the distance, and an occasional faintly revealed, perspective-like “vista with a void seen through,” glimmering at intervals as a chasm in the hills permitted the eye to rest upon the far obscurity of uninterrupted distance.

The approach to the castle was by a superb avenue of full-grown beech trees, through a noble park interspersed with immense oaks and elms, skirted by clumps of wood, untrodden dingles, and sequestered groves, and adorned by a magnificent sheet of water that ran its estuaries into the dells and thickets of the tangled and sometimes impenetrable forest-ground. The trees, too, had grown into every possible shape of picturesque luxuriance, and threw their heavy shadows and solemn glooms over the brighter verdure of the pasture beneath.

"And there soft sweeps in velvet green
The plain, with many a glade between ;
Where tangled alleys far invade
The depths of the brown forest shade ;
And the tall fern obscured the lawn,
Sweet shelter for the sportive fawn."

The sheep feeding in scattered flocks, and the fallow-deer grazing near them, and seen occasionally through the gaps of the forest, increased the beauty of the scene, and added still more to its character of almost boundless and endless variety.

CHAPTER II.

CONSTANCE'S CHARACTER.

A radiant vision in her joy, she moved
More like a poet's dream, or form divine,
Heaven's prototype of perfect womanhood ;
So lovely was the presence.

SOUTHEY'S *Roderick*.

She alone in the abstract of herself, that small but ravishing substance, comprehends whatever is or can be wished in the idea of woman.

MASSINGER.

Or Constance Graham, the heiress of the before-mentioned fair demesne, we have at length to speak. Her countenance, though perfectly beautiful, and full of brilliancy and

animation, was naturally capable of great variety of expression. There was on her brow a meditative tone, almost amounting to seriousness, which it was difficult to reconcile with her general buoyancy and elasticity of character. But in this air of pensive thoughtfulness—a sort of shadow of joy—there was nothing that approached the sombre or the sad ; on the contrary, it was relieved and almost banished by the smiles which rose in rapid succession, like handmaids, to her bidding, and “ did their spiriting gently.” There was a play of feature that revealed the inmost emotion of the soul; the cheek now flushing with pleasure, now pallid with thought; the brilliant eye now alive with light, now deepening into repose, or melting with tenderness and feeling. Radiant with beauty, and overflowing with natural spirits, Constance Graham enjoyed an equanimity of temper *à toute épreuve*.

Constance possessed an animated vivacity of disposition, breathing life and grace into every object it neared or touched,—mingled, however, with a benevolence of feeling which served to retain that admiration which mere beauty so often fails to secure. Hers was that species of beauty which it is difficult to describe, and which sets at defiance the powers of the painter and the sculptor; it was that beauty, the most powerful charm of which consisted in expression: and there was, moreover, in the fair possessor of so many charms the most perfect unconsciousness of their existence.

Too lovely to dread the rivalry of any one, too sincere to descend to affectation, or to admit for a moment of disguise, she won all hearts without the assistance of either art or artifice. There was *one*, however, from out of the crowd of her admirers, for whom she herself indulged a feeling that perhaps exceeded the gentler attachments of friendship,—the

same who had so unexpectedly encountered her on the day of the public rejoicing for the peace.

Dudley Ravensworth was the second son of Sir Francis Ravensworth. Of Sir Francis himself we may pause to say, that he had been a courtier and diplomatist by profession since his earliest years. He was an imperfect specimen of Sir Henry Wotton's definition of an ambassador, that is as far as the virtue is concerned, "a virtuous man sent abroad to lie for the good of his country;" and at the present period of our history occupied, through dint of unwearying perseverance, an important situation in the neighbouring kingdom of Ireland. Towering ambition was the main spring of his life; self-aggrandisement the object of his existence. He was very conceited, of voracious vanity, though by no means good-looking; but of this last circumstance he was profoundly and obdurately ignorant; he was a bore of

stupendous magnitude, — a *ci-devant jeune homme*, unconscious of the meaning of the term *has been*, — a man of decayed fortune and broken constitution, — and very aristocratic in his notions ; he had an utter horror of all new creations, — Lords and Baronets springing up every year like so many mushrooms.

Filled with lofty ideas of the consequence and dignity of ancient families, Sir Francis looked down with the most ineffable contempt upon the many upstarts of the day ; persons, as he was pleased to call them, “ without grandfathers.” He tyrannised over the weak, and succumbed to the strong ; he piqued himself also on admitting to his acquaintance none under the rank of himself ; station and the peerage being points of importance of such weight in his mind as to outweigh every other circumstance connected with the ordinary affairs of human life.

His manner corresponded with this meta-

physical conception of dignity in the abstract. He measured out his bows exactly according to the rank of the party, from the saccharine smile, familiar nod, and “Ha! how are you?” to the formal bend, and “Your servant, sir.” To the great he was humble even to fawning, full of smiles, with a servile manner and sycophantic demeanour. To the poor, his haughtiness bordered on contempt. He could bend, where it was profitable to bend, without considering whether the homage were worthily or unworthily bestowed; he could smile with most fascinating sweetness of expression, without the least internal sensation of pleasure or delight.

Ravensworth manor was in the vicinage of Graham Castle, but the owner had not visited it for many years. With Sir Alexander Graham, Sir Francis was scarcely acquainted. A cold distant bow was the only recognition that ever passed between them when they had

met by accident. This feud had been ascribed to many causes, — to the deadly hatred of the two houses in the wars of Lancaster and York, when the ancestor of Sir Francis Ravensworth, taken prisoner at the battle of Northampton, was cruelly slain, and his property confiscated in 1460. It had also been traced to an old political struggle.

Now, undoubtedly, there had been hereditary feuds in ruder times; but they could not have actuated the present heads of the houses to nourish a personal dislike. It was some offence and slight which Sir Francis fancied had been shown him by Sir Alexander, that influenced his conduct, and which was as deeply resented by the owner of Graham Castle. At a public meeting, in which the former Baronet had indulged, “as was his custom,” in bold assertions, irrelevant digressions, illogical and contradictory inferences, Sir Alexander had, in reply, pointed out the impossibility of “fol-

lowing the flights of visionary speculatists into the regions of theory and absurd hypothesis;" and, in reference to some political job in which Sir Francis was implicated, proceeded to " bare the mean heart that lurks beneath a star."

Sir Francis was, one of those who have not the judgment to reflect that men may be violent political opponents, and yet enjoy the social intercourse of private life. With him every quarrel was a personal one; his haughty and overbearing temper magnified every trifling dispute into an act of undisguised hostility. Matters, however, had not proceeded with Sir Francis so smoothly as he could have wished, or perhaps as he himself, from his general system of conventional propriety, had exactly deserved at the hands of destiny. His eldest son, to begin with, the heir-apparent of all that lineage, hitherto unmixed and untainted, had lately formed a *mésalliance* in Italy, which event had so exasperated him,

that all intercourse had eventually ceased between him and his father ; and on Dudley, his second, he had now begun to look with an uneasy and unsleeping sort of suspicion, as if *he too* would suddenly end in perpetrating what Sir Francis considered as highly mortifying and derogatory to the family dignity.

Such, then, was his present position ; nor can we say that it was, all things considered, a very enviable one. With his son Dudley, however, we have more to do, and to him, therefore, we again return.

Dudley Ravensworth had just attained his ninth year when he was sent to Westminster School. He had now grown up a tall handsome youth, with a profusion of dark brown hair, fine large dark eyes, and a frank, open, and ingenuous countenance. His disposition was affable, though not tame. If he perceived what he imagined to be an affront, his natural

courage would break forth impetuously. His independent spirit, his goodnature, his talents, and a certain unexplainable magnanimity about him, soon gained him the affections of his schoolfellows; for the weak ever found in him a champion and a protector, and the strong and the tyrannous a ready and resolute opponent.

Alfred Graham, the only brother of Constance, was then a year his junior, and the generous disposition of the boys had led them to forget the jealousy that had so long existed between the heads of the families. Young Graham gave early promise of abilities of no common order; indeed the mark of genius was indelibly stamped upon his brow. But his frame was unfortunately enfeebled by long illness, while his languid and sickly-looking expression of countenance indicated that his sufferings were not yet wholly exhausted. The deep red hectic spot burned on his cheek, adding

the *mockery* of beauty to the slow ravages of an incurable and subtle disease. His disposition was extremely gentle and confiding; and he had found in Dudley Ravensworth a friend after his own heart. Full, therefore, and unrestricted was the confidence on either side; sincere and fervent was the friendship of the youths; but, alas! like all other mortal friendships, theirs was soon destined to be dissolved.

A numerous party had assembled at Graham Castle during the winter holidays, and Dudley Ravensworth had been invited to accompany his school companion and friend, and he had wrung from his father an unwilling consent to his accepting the invitation; when, in the midst of the festivities, young Graham fell ill, and, to the grief of his family, this last attack of his insatiate disease was pronounced to be fatal. Constance was vigilant and unremitting in her attentions; she would scarcely for a moment quit her brother's side: she watched

the progress of his melancholy disorder ; her hand smoothed the pillow of the sufferer ; her kind heart suggested every plan for affording relief ; then she would kneel, and with pure devotion join in the prayer for the sick and dying ; but her petitions were unavailing.

Alfred sank with rapidity. Day after day saw him become weaker and fainter ; and in a short period of time the heir of Sir Alexander and the ambitious Lady Margaret expired. On the morning of his death the sun rose with unusual splendour. Dudley had watched all night by his bedside. The beams fell upon his beautiful countenance pale as alabaster.

" Constance," said the dying boy, as he fondly took her hand, " we must part."

" Say not so, dear Alfred. There is yet hope. Yes, yes, I know—I feel there is hope."

" No, dearest, no :" he gasped for breath ; then, in a faint tone, murmured " Dudley—Oh, Constance—why is he not here ? "

"Dearest Alfred, he is here."

"Dudley—Constance"—there was a pause; his breath came short and quick, his lips moved slightly but uttered nothing, one convulsive sigh escaped him, he sank lifeless in the arms of his friend. This melancholy event left not an untouched heart in the village, and reduced the inmates of the castle to a state bordering on distraction.

"Notwithstanding the warnings of philosophers, and the daily examples of losses and misfortunes which life forces upon our observation, such is the absorption of our thoughts in the business of the present day, such the resignation of our reason to empty hopes of future felicity, or such our unwillingness to foresee what we dread, that every calamity comes suddenly upon us, and not only presses us as a burden, but crushes as a blow."—So writes Samuel Johnson on the death of his mother; and who of my readers does

not feel the weight and truth of this observation?

Nothing is more evident than that the very cradle witnesses the departure of a great portion of the human species, and equally certain is it that the decays of age must terminate in death. We hear every hour of *it* arresting the progress of the young, by casualty, pestilence, or sickness—or consigning the more advanced in age to “that bourne from whence no traveller returns.” It presents itself to us under various forms. The grave still yawns for the victims of loathsome disease, abject penury, destructive wars, devouring ocean, desolating fires, raging storms and famine; and yet with all these instances of the shortness and uncertainty of life, it seldom or ever comes home to us; the subject of death is seldom present to our thoughts.

Sorrow that happens in the very midst of gladness and rejoicing is felt to be peculiarly

bitter in its effects, as sickness falls heaviest on those who are in the full enjoyment of health ; and *death*, as it were, amidst *life*, startles and affrights the more by the contrast. Sir Alexander, Lady Margaret, his sister Constance, and his companion, Dudley Ravensworth, felt, as Alfred expired, stunned ; so terrible and so appalling was the blow. A week before, all was gaiety and joy ; “troops of friends,” young, like himself, were alive with spirit. *He* was happy in all the brightheartedness of sunny boyhood ; and now, how was the scene changed !

On this occasion Dudley experienced a sensation, never known to him before ; when he thought of his departed friend he found excuses for every weakness, palliatives for every fault ; he recollects a thousand endearments unreturned, a thousand favours unrepaid, and which had, at the moment, glided insensibly from his memory. Sad, therefore, were the

hours in which Dudley, a martyr to his grief, sat by the side of his early companion.

Lady Margaret was not a distracted mourner ; she supported her affliction with great fortitude. The world gave her credit for extraordinary patience and resignation ; little did they know her submission proceeded from constitutional apathy.

Dudley, now called into action, struggled against his own sorrow ; he was with the mourners, mingling his tears with theirs, cheering and supporting them in the hour of distress. Nothing that could tend to alleviate their grief was neglected. Constance, too, returned, spirit-bowed and heart-stricken, from Alfred's grave ; her tears fell "like the dew-drop from Heaven" on a parched soil.

But let us not linger on this dark page of her existence. Time, the comforter, wrought its miracle ; it had softened the poignancy of grief, the wound was cicatrised. Time did its

work ; and, deeply as Constance wept over the untimely fate of her poor brother, she derived consolation from the knowledge that he was prepared to die. Religion sent comfort to her desolate bosom, and repelled the outpourings of despair.

Ever since her brother's death, Constance had known no companion but her own sombre thoughts. Amidst the intensity and anguish of her grief she had no one near her to whom she could reveal the inward emotions of her heart. There were none, in fact, from whom she could derive either sympathy or consolation, or with whom she could interchange her thoughts and feelings. Her father had soon recovered from his grief, severe as it had been ; her mother had latterly begun to console herself in planning new schemes of ambition in favour of Constance herself. In Dudley, however, the latter had found one to whom she could impart her sorrows equally with her

joys ; and from him, while he still remained with them, she received the only consolation her heart was fitted to receive ; for, with him, she could still mourn over the remembrance of her brother, while he as tenderly lamented his friend.

What can be more delightful than the approving voice of one who appreciates every thought that springs in the young and guileless heart ? Need we to add, that the, at first, merely giddy and youthful preference of Dudley and Constance Graham for each other, soon ripened into feelings of deep, fond, and irradiable love ?

CHAPTER III.

INTERVIEW PREVIOUS TO DUDLEY'S LEAVING
ENGLAND.

Here is my hand for my true constancy,
And when that hour o'er slips me in the day,
Wherein I sigh not for thy sake,
The next ensuing hour some foul mischance
Torments me for my love's forgetfulness.

SHAKSPEARE.

We must take our readers back to the period when Dudley and Constance were now enjoying all the *agrémens* of Graham Castle. The pleasure of being alone together was indeed deep and intense. Through the rich and beautiful woods, over the sunny lawns,

Dudley and Constance wandered on. It would, however, be uninteresting to detail the progress of a feeling which grew with their growth and strengthened with their strength. There was an undefined and strange intelligence which informed them that they were becoming inexpressibly dear to each other. Their eyes met oftener than they were formerly accustomed to do, and on meeting were withdrawn in confusion. Their similarities of taste, their mutual admiration and delight, soon ripened into passion; they loved with all the intenseness of a first love; it was not strange that two young hearts thus brought together should become one. Their mornings were spent in a luxurious *far niente*, in wandering around the beautiful scenery of Graham Castle, climbing its wild mountains, loitering upon its lakes, listening to the sound "of the light dip of the suspended oar." Their evenings were passed in the interchange

of conversation and music. They sang together the most touching duets of Rossini, in which Dudley's deep-toned voice mated so well with Constance's beautiful contr'alto. They read together those musical scenes of Metastasio, so replete with the finest touches of poetry, so abundant in all the varieties and transitions of passion. Happy were they, perfectly happy in one another's society ; theirs was the dream of unalloyed delight. In a word, they loved.

Constance had ever evinced the greatest generosity and candour towards Dudley ; she had neither concealed nor disguised her sentiments,—no cold-hearted prudence had restrained her ; conscious of the purity of her thoughts, she had given him all her love. But as usual, “the course of true love” did not go out of its way “to run smooth :” rumours had reached Sir Francis Ravensworth of the intimacy that^{*} was springing up be-

tween his son and the youthful Constance, and his diplomatic eye, being accustomed to penetrate into futurity, aroused his fears with regard to the important result, to which this at present all but childish attachment might lead; he, therefore, issued a protocol desiring Dudley instantly to quit England, and proceed to travel on the Continent for at least a year. Three days were alone allowed him to prepare for his journey.

As with all persons of enthusiastic temperament, Dudley called up those dreams the young are wont to form in the brighter period of their existence. He imagined it was easy to love on with unshaken affection, however distant the fulfilment of his hopes might be. He was not aware of the numberless influences which, during a prolonged separation, tend effectually to weaken, if not entirely to disengage a youthful attachment.

As the day approached which was to wit-

ness his departure from England and Constance, his mind became dejected. Constance exerted all the powers of her heart to banish from him the sorrowing thoughts of that parting, which, though she betrayed it not, depressed her as deeply as her lover.

It was on the evening preceding the day on which Dudley was to depart, that he wandered through a shrubbery bordering the river. Every tree was hallowed by a remembrance of the playmate of his infancy, the companion of his boyhood; he sought a retired path to pursue undisturbed the train of his reflections, but was suddenly roused from his reverie by the sound of a footstep; he looked round, and with the utmost surprise beheld her who had awakened the conflicting feelings he had been endeavouring to lull into repose. In a moment he was at her side. They sat down together upon a rock that overhung the river; the stream, stealing calmly and silently

on at their feet, seemed as if unwilling to interrupt the quiet stillness of the evening, or the pensive disposition of the lovers' thoughts,

“ So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
And yet they glide like happiness away.”

Dudley pressed Constance's hand gently, so gently, she could not be offended; he next prayed fervently for her happiness.

“ You will not forget me, Constance, when I am absent?” he said, “ you will sometimes think kindly of me.”

“ Forget you — never, Dudley !” was her energetic and promptly uttered reply, “ my brother's best and dearest friend :” here remembrance choked her voice, and, with a quivering lip, she faintly added in a tone that came directly from the heart, and went to it, “ Never !”

Dudley, as he held her trembling hand in his, entreated her that she would wear a ring

which he now placed upon her finger; under the initials D. R. these words were engraved,

“Amore e Costanza!”

“Yes, Dudley,” she replied, “for your sake will I retain it even to my death hour. May heaven bless you!” then smiling through her tears, she added, “take this flower, this perishing trifle, ‘tis all I have to give, keep it even when it is dead, for the sake of one who will never forget you.”

“Farewell, then, my dearest Constance! I go happy; if I return not, there is one true heart that will grieve for me.”

Their conversation, we need not say, was long and sad; tears more than once attested their tenderness and their grief, but they vowed everlasting fidelity; they promised frequent communication, and, at length, silently they proceeded in their return to the Castle.

The next day was the last in which they were destined to share the bliss of each other’s

society. Few words were spoken by any of the party during dinner ; Sir Alexander engrossed Dudley's attention during the evening. At rather an early hour, too, Lady Margaret rose to retire, and with a chilly manner wished her departing guest "good night."

At these words, Constance turned pale, her eyes met Dudley's, and, as he bade her a last adieu, he contrived to whisper to her, "Remember !"

"Dudley, I will ! I will !" was responded in the same stifled voice. She then turned away, lest her mother should witness her emotion.

For some months Constance's mind was absorbed in the most melancholy thoughts, at the loss of the much prized presence of one to whom she had been united by ties the strongest and dearest. She looked in vain for the smile that was wont to greet her, and for the kind words that soothed her : the solitude

that succeeded to grief made her experience all the misery of—

“the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feelings unemployed.”

But her tears were not the tears of unmixed bitterness ; he was gone, it was true, but she placed implicit faith in his love and fealty ; for, if there were truth in man, it must, she felt, dwell in the ingenuous breast of Dudley. Honour and he were in one brotherhood ; he had left her with the certainty of being beloved ; that certainty cast a momentary brightness over the dark decree of fate, and helped to sustain her fortitude under circumstances of a nature more than commonly depressing to a young and sensitive being.

Two years had now elapsed since Dudley's departure from England, during which period he had been cherishing his passion and pursuing his studies at Gottingen ; and he had

only just returned from Germany, having been appointed ensign in the —— Regiment, when he had met Constance for the first time after his long absence, in the manner already described—at St. Paul's.

CHAPTER IV.

LADY M. GRAHAM AND LORD AATHERLEY'S
CHARACTER.

"Love should seek its match ; and that is love
Or nothing ! Station—fortune find their match
In things resembling them. They are not love !
Comes love (that subtle essence, without which
Life were but leaden dulness—weariness !
A plodding trudger on a heavy road !)
Comes it of title deeds which fools may boast ?
Or coffers vilest hands may hold the keys of ?
Or that ethereal lamp that lights the eyes
To shed their sparkling lustre o'er the face,
Gives to the velvet skin its blushing glow,
And burns as bright beneath the peasant's roof
As roof of palaced prince ? Yes ! Love should seek
Its match ; then give my love its match in thine,
Its match which in thy gentle breast doth lodge
So rich, so earthly, heavenly, fair, and rich,
As monarchs have no thought of on their thrones,
Which kingdoms do bear up."

SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

DUDLEY and Constance had loved before the death of Alfred, but they were then too young, too timid, and too little tutored in the skilful ways of life to arrange any plan for the furtherance of their future correspondence ; still it could live upon its own resources ; and the very death of the friend and brother gave to it a charmed life.

"The love where death hath set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow."

The young are bound to the will and the authority of their elders by many invisible ties ; but these same ties are, nevertheless, found to be fastened irrevocably around their victims. Dudley had, therefore, retired from the presence of his beloved Constance because fate and necessity had, as it were, compelled him from her ; and Constance had suffered him to depart, because she felt that she must still yield to the inclinations of those whom it had

hitherto been a dictate of her nature, as well as an obligation of duty, never to disoblige, contradict, or disobey. The lovers had, therefore, been enforced to submit to the seemingly interminable separation of two years and four months, when the unexpected meeting at St. Paul's revived, in the hearts of both, that crouching but not dormant passion which, though it had been subdued for a while, had not by any means lost its energy.

To return to the narrative: the ball at White's was succeeded by other *fêtes* and festivities; for of these there was scarcely any cessation so long as the first capital in the world saw within its lines a crowd of kings, princes, and potentates, assembled from all quarters of the world, from the frozen shores of the northern Baltic, to the sultry plains of the Portuguese Brazils.

Thrown together in the gorgeous throng, and partakers, in part, of this general scene of national festivity, Constance and Dudley rested

happily content in the secure affections of each other. Occasionally, too, they met; and perhaps the secret unexplained confession, that each was subject to the control of a hostile power, added an interest to the circumstance of their meeting.—Love's natural atmosphere is danger.

In the meanwhile, Dudley had called at Lady Margaret Graham's more than once: the first time he called she was refused, though he knew she was at home; the next time, he had had the fortune or misfortune to find her in the drawing-room, alone; and, on the third occasion, he had surprised her in company with a large party of leading fashionables who had been convened together for the purpose of patronising, or, as it may be termed, getting up, a rival concert. Amongst the younger ladies was Constance.

As Dudley's name was announced, Lady Margaret's vivacity of spirit suddenly left her,

for the barometer of her attention rose and fell as her visitors were considered worthy of her attention or not ; and, instead of persevering in her arguments as an authoritative leader, she suddenly broke from the subject under discussion, or agreed, at random, to whatever the coterie chose of themselves to propose.

We live in a jealous state, since we live, for the most part, under the suspicious surveillance of those who take a watchful interest in all the details of our ordinary opinions, conduct, and pursuits ; and Lady Margaret accordingly watched, with lynx eyes and hasty glances, the manner of Dudley and her daughter as they met. In the mean time, the conversation diverged into general topics ; and whether it was now continued upon trifles or not, Lady Margaret was called upon from time to time to perform her part.

Dudley and Constance drew instinctively together ; there was a crowd of troublesome

sofas, chairs, knick-knack tables, trifles affecting to be furniture, in their way, not to mention certain formidable groups of lay-figure visitors: yet they still contrived, nevertheless, to meet. The reminiscences of the past, a fluttering yet fond all-breathing hope of the future, a sympathy, in short, which it is impossible to attempt to explain, affected their hearts, and threw an earnest life into their looks which made *them* poetry in a room full of prose.

Dudley had drawn to a window from one side of the apartment; Constance had approached the same spot from another; they both, doubtless, intended to enter the recess, yet, at the same time, nursed the hope that their mutual intention might appear to be simply the result of accident. But Lady Margaret, who might have proved a match for Argus, here, though with much gentleness, and without apparent premeditation, interfered.

"Constance," she said, but Constance heard not. "Hem ! Constance, do love, go talk to Lady Heavyside for a few minutes — she is going away presently, and it looks so odd to see her seated by herself."

"But she is so tiresome, mamma," said the unwilling Constance; "and I have seen so little of her,—compared, mamma, with your experience of her."

"Well, well, Constance, *as you please.*"

This *as you please*, was a formidable sound to Constance's ear, since it rather signified, from Lady Margaret's manner of pronouncing it, to be "*as I please.*"

"I will go, mamma," said Constance, timidly ; and, fearing lest the weight of her mother's resentment might eventually fall upon her friend and favourite Dudley Ravensworth, added, "which is the Dowager Lady Heavyside?" she was now preparing, and at once to obey, but Lady Margaret, like

another wily Lady Ashton over her modern but not less devoted Lucy, thought proper, at this juncture, to abandon the temporising system, and to resort to one more summary and explicit.

"Mr. Ravensworth," she was now therefore pleased to say, "my daughter has so many duties to attend to, that I trust, you will in future excuse her absence, and"—*mine* also—were the words that were implied to follow; but Lady Margaret spoke them not. "However, pray don't leave us," she added more kindly, seeing that Dudley was preparing to depart. "At any rate, we shall see you at Almack's on Wednesday night. Lady Hazzleton has promised us tickets;" and in this vague style, partly courteous, partly serenely vindictive, was Dudley dismissed.

Dudley felt satisfied with Constance, and not at all so with her mother. He feared too, at times, lest Constance might be gradually

induced to sever from him. *That*, however, was impossible with Constance; but we must allow something for a lover's fears, since these very fears are but so many proofs of the intensity of love. Fears are the mulberry leaves on which that idle silk-worm, love, feeds. Indeed, Dudley had no small reason to feel himself any thing but *safe*, when opposed in a warfare of interests, with so determined a she-diplomatist as Lady Margaret. In truth, that lady, but half an hour before the appointed levée of visitors, had summoned Sir Alexander to a *tête-a-tête*, which had for its object the future destiny of their daughter and heiress, Constance.

"It occurs to me," observed Lady Margaret, after making a few desultory introductory observations, 'too tedious to mention in this advertisement,' "that Constance is unhappy. She seems dissatisfied with home, and I much fear, entertains an idle hankering

after that good-natured creature, Dudley Ravensworth. Were her thoughts but diverted into a new channel, we might then have hopes of her. Lord Atherley seemed rather to admire her the day he dined here, and he has called I dare say more than three times since, and has sighed twice. *One* visit we may take to ourselves ; but the others were meant, I have little doubt, for somebody else. Indeed, he told me, half confidentially, that he hoped for the happiness of a still more intimate acquaintance. A better title, a Marquise or Dukedom, would have suited *me* (Lady Margaret seemed here to take no account of Constance,) as well ; but we cannot fashion every thing to our wishes. I think I should accept his offer ; besides the fortune is unexceptionable. Now, pray, Sir Alexander, let me have your advice in all this."

"Why, I really do not exactly know," replied Sir Alexander, in some embarrassment ;

‘ I have no objection however, to be guided, by your judgment in the matter ;—you know best.’

“ Yes, very true : but you *must* think for yourself,” returned Lady Margaret, who knew that she should have her own way, only she desired her husband’s name and authority in any affair to which there could be attached anything like responsibility. “ Now, to save all troublesome discussions, pray take care to discourage young Ravensworth, and have Lord Atherley about you as much as you possibly can, without appearing to act from any other motive than what mere chance might dictate. We must have him at Almack’s; and, to-morrow, too, I think I may venture to take him to Lady Montgomery’s. I’ll write this instant.”

On the following evening Portman Square rattled with carriages. Thither the high-born, the thoughtless, the gay, glided in the circling

throng. The spacious rooms of one of its largest houses were crowded almost to suffocation, dazzling with bright lamps, bright jewels, and still brighter eyes. The drawing-rooms began to blaze

"With lights by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror."

There was within a lively uproar of music, dancing, and conversation.

Among the many beautiful and admired women present one sat retired — Constance Graham, — evidently anxious to avoid observation. The simplicity and tone (if the word may be used) of her dress were in perfect accordance with the innocence of her air and the thoughtfulness of her countenance. Two persons were close to her, one engaged in conversation with her mother, Lady Margaret, while the other, Lord Atherley, was idling in the net in which he was enmeshed. In a few minutes they were joined by young Ravens-

worth, who, with a look of suppressed excitement, bowed, and stammered out an apology for his intrusion. He coloured, and asked Constance to dance with him. She too blushing, slightly assented.

During the next quarter of an hour the following broken conversation passed between them, interrupted often by the figure of the dance, and the nearness of Lady Margaret Graham and Lord Atherley, who had placed themselves close to the devoted pair.

“ Miss Graham—for you will not allow me to call you Constance, I hope you do not regret that I withdrew you from Lord Atherley, his conversation seemed deeply interesting ? ”

“ Indeed, no ! He never interests me much. He was discussing the merits of Rossini’s new opera, which for once he admitted was worth the sacrifice of a hurried dinner : this led to one of his gastronomic rhapsodies ; but, with all his faults he is very good-natured, and

you, you will get the name of a flirt, or be looked upon as a forsaken one; and remember, Constance, there can be no greater disadvantage to a girl than to have it supposed her affections have been trifled with."

ham occupied her former seat, and, when asked by Lord Atherley to dance, declined on the plea of fatigue.

Shortly after the party retired, Dudley came forward and handed Constance to the carriage. Lady Margaret coldly wished him good night, and then, turning to her daughter, said with a degree of earnestness,—

“Constance, an end must be put to this. Mr. Ravensworth must find some one else to amuse himself with.”

“Mr. Ravensworth!”

“Yes, Mr. Ravensworth! I will not suffer my daughter to be made a fool of by this vain young man, and so I shall give him clearly to understand, if ever he shows the slightest indication of repeating his conduct of this evening.”

Constance sighed deeply, but replied not.

“Well,” continued Lady Margaret, “if you allow Mr. Ravensworth to dangle after

you, you will get the name of a flirt, or be looked upon as a forsaken one; and remember, Constance, there can be no greater disadvantage to a girl than to have it supposed her affections have been trifled with."

CHAPTER V.

ALMACK'S.

“ Parents have flinty hearts!
No tears can move them.”

OTWAY.

FORTUNATELY for Lady Margaret and her schemes, she found a willing helpmate in all her undertakings in her husband. Sir Alexander, who was kind whenever he was sincere, returned Lord Atherley's last three calls all at once, found him from home, and repeated the visit within a week. A family dinner was the next thing which Lady Margaret got up, and then she opened her preciously arranged game of chances.

To remedy any obscurity that may attach to this expression, let us explain:—Lady Margaret, then, *chanced* to be going to the Opera on the night that succeeded to her family dinner; she could accommodate Lord Atherley with a seat in her box if he chose, and she resolved to take her daughter that she might have the benefit of a musical lesson. Lady Margaret next *chanced* to promise to patronise a concert, and Lord Atherley had a ticket placed at his disposal. Her next *chance* was to take a bad cold which confined her to her apartments, and left her daughter to do the honors of the table, and maintain the conversation with Lord Atherley, who came to dinner upon a *chance* invitation from Sir Alexander after a visit to the exhibition, and a few turns upon horseback in the park. Lady Margaret's concluding *chance* was to get suddenly quite well again, and to venture to take an airing in a new curricle which Lord Atherley had built,

and, with Lord Atherley himself for her charioteer ; and, as a finish to her doctrine of chances, she had Constance set in her place towards the termination of the drive, having *chanced* to forget an appointment with the redoubtable Lady Heavyside, which appointment had had no previous existence.

To one and all of these *chance* manœuvres Lord Atherley had fallen a prey, and the result was, he became their appointed esquire to the forthcoming Almacks. The fact was, he admired Constance Graham. Indeed, he was in indolent love with her, and he followed for her sake in the wake of her mother. Moreover, though there were richer heiresses than Constance Graham, there were few who possessed a long descended family estate. One other motive for Lord Atherley's attachment remained ; he thought he had rivals, and it was his desire that he and he alone should carry off the prize. Lady Margaret, too, ever appeared

to him a good-natured, obliging, *simple* minded, woman, and Sir Alexander a man of good honest principles, only a little too generous, at least such were his lordship's impressions of the parties. He now became a frequent visitor in Grosvenor-square, where he dined almost daily. Constance was annoyed at seeing so much of him, and provoked to find herself the object of his attention.

But to the Earl of Atherley, who, according to Boyle, was described as "Earl of Atherley, Grosvenor-square; Compton Audley, Warwickshire; Wingfield Manor House, Hampshire":—he was a nobleman of very large property and of very limited understanding. He had also the good fortune to be a bachelor of forty; having let that amount of time slip through his fingers,—neither he, nor any one about him could very well tell how. He was, according to the account his friends gave of him, "the most good-natured easy man in the world."

He wished to marry Constance Graham, as has been intimated, partly for love, or what *he* called love, and partly from interest, being desirous of becoming the possessor of the old baronial territory, Graham Castle. He had been a comely youth in his seventeenth year, and had, as the military phrase is, carried his *colours* through ; that is, he retained an undethroned rosy countenance, under grey hair tending to white : of course there was the usual romantic story, that for love unrequited his hair had undergone a Protean change in one night. Alas ! the only grief that had ever befallen Lord Atherley, was the loss of a horse or dinner, and the failure of a plan, entirely of his own invention, for propelling balloons by the not very aërial means of a steam-engine.

He was one of those *bizarres* mentioned by Madame de Staél, “ à l’égard des femmes, qu’il leur pardonne plutôt de manquer à leurs devoirs,

que d'attirer l'attention par des talens distingués." He studied only, to use a phrase of Dr. Johnson's, "one of the arts that aggrandise life;" viz. Cookery. His *precept* was "In solo vivendi causa palato est;" his *practice*, to devote his best energies to his masticatorial duties. This oracle of culinary love piqued himself in fact upon being a *bon vivant*; a *gourmet* of taste and sentiment, he possessed "une erudition gastronomique tout à fait effrayante." "Nothing like good eating and drinking to bring out the humanities."

" La table est mon seul amour ;
Manger, chanter, rire et boire,
Voilà mon ordre du jour—"

were his constant themes, and he acted upon the maxim they implied.

The way to his heart, to use a vulgar truism, was through his mouth. He was a ventripotent *Apicius*, a real epicure; one who boasted that he never wasted his appetite on a joint. His

life was a confused *mélée*, being as it were unfixed and without a motive, save in his meals, and there he was rigidly and inflexibly punctual. “The tocsin of the soul, the dinner bell,” would at all times rouse him to action. We have now only to sum up this brief account of Lord Atherley by saying, that among the loves of the great—as Alexander loved his horse Bucephalus; Numa a lap-dog; Augustus a parrot; Caligula a horse; Virgil a butterfly; Nero a starling; Commodus an ape; Heliogabalus a sparrow; Honorius a chicken; Baron Trenck a spider—so did Lord Atherley love gastronomy; he discoursed of the science *de gueule* with as much gravity as if he was speaking of theology; he reversed the saying of Moliere’s miser, “Il faut manger pour vivre et non pas vivre pour manger;” and with some slight variation realised the line which the Roman epigrammatist has so pithily described—

"Prandeo, poto, cano, ludo, (not much of the lego)
Coeno, quieco."

"The noblest study of mankind is man." Lord Atherley studied man, and that man was himself.

Dudley in the mean time forebore to pay Lady Margaret any more morning calls; his reception had been upon the last occasion, according to her ladyship's own phraseology, "the north side of friendly;" and he therefore determined to await either Sir Alexander's return call, or some invitation to join Lady Margaret's evening circle. But he waited in vain; no card from that quarter came to relieve the dull monotony of his present life; and it would seem that both Sir Alexander and Lady Margaret, despite their personal good inclination towards himself, had made up their minds to forget and to forsake him. Their desertion was mortifying at any time; but as it closed the path by which he could

still hope to see and to converse with Constance, his solitude was distressed by impatient and vexatious reflections. At Almack's, however, he should meet the party; Constance might dance with him—he might again talk to her—he might again look upon her. In the course of the night he might be able to learn something of her mother's real disposition towards him. At all events he should pass the evening in the happy wealth of present bliss. The mother of Constance had said something, which he had heard but indistinctly, about her daughter's duties; but at a ball, where people meet to dance, there could be no more real or feigned apologies.

Alas, poor Dudley! he knew not what the activity of Lady Margaret had within ten short days of Almack's ball brought about. He knew not what a hungry lion wandered in the path, in the shape of good comfortable eating and feasting, Lord Atherley. He knew not that

Constance, somewhat unexpectedly brought into every-day contact with a man whom her father and mother invariably and actively flattered and caressed, found herself entangled by invisible strings, from which in vain could she shake herself free. To Almack's, however, he went; it was his forlorn hope, and all his happiness was ventured upon the success or disappointment of the wished-for night. Almack's! what magic is in thy name! what a sway and importance does it exercise over the fashionable world! its origin is incidentally noticed by Horace Walpole, "There is a new institution which begins to make, and if it proceeds will make a considerable noise. It is a club of both sexes, to be erected at Almack's, on the mode of that of the men at White's. Mrs. Fitzroy, Lady Pembroke, Mrs. Leynall, and Miss Lloyd are the patronesses."

"What's in a name?" With what power-

ful emotion does many a fair bosom beat at the mention of Almack's?

In what clime can be seen a more radiant assemblage of rank, of beauty, and of fashion than grace these rooms? No one ever yet stood "amidst the glittering throng," and saw the galaxy of fair women shine around,—the beautiful faces and noble forms of England's sons and daughters, without feeling assured that more beauty met the gaze at once than could be found together in any other part of the globe.

It has been the fate of the ladies patronesses to be attacked from many quarters, and abuse has been heaped upon the institution. These attacks are natural enough, emanating, as they do, from disappointed parties. Though the power which the *administration* possess is absolute, and without appeal, it is seldom exercised in a capricious manner. Much has been said of the "despotism of the auto-

cratesses," of their personal dislikes, political biases, individual prejudices and partialities. But how can these influence their decision, unless, indeed, under a coalition cabinet? Their office is no sinecure; the trouble of opening, reading, and replying to, a host of applications is enough to try the patience of less irritable beings than lady patronesses.

And what has made "Almack's?" Fashion! Fashion!—a varnish which is much used for the purpose of imparting a false gloss. It is like most other varnishes,—of a poisonous nature; and produces the strangest effects upon the unhappy persons who use it. It causes "their tapers to burn to bedwise" when the sun rises. It occasions them to come to town for the winter at the sweet season when spring smiles in all her charms, and to go into the country for the summer just as the fall of the sallow leaf gives notice of the approach of winter. It makes them do many things that are ex-

tremely painful to them, and deters them from the pursuit of quiet, heartfelt enjoyment, from a dread of its petrifying dulness.

Yes! the fascination of fashion is irresistible. Whether in patronising lectures on chemistry, animal magnetism, opera singers or dancers, fancy fairs, popular preachers, or industrious fleas; it deprives them of the power of seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, reasoning, or deciding for themselves, and compels them to see, hear, taste, feel, reason, and decide as others do.

But to return to Dudley. By some mischance he found that he had set out too soon for Almack's, and in order to avoid the tedium of waiting till others should arrive, he drove round by one of the principal theatres, into which he looked. The consequence was, that where he wished to touch time to the moment, he arrived too late; at any rate he was amongst the very latest. When he entered

the larger room, Constance, Miss Cressingham, Lady Margaret, and Lord Atherley were together in a group, looking on upon the dancers. Constance was simply yet superbly dressed, and Lady Margaret appeared in a sort of tiara of diamonds of the larger size, admirably fashioned. The party too were evidently in high spirits; and, to the consternation of Dudley, Constance laughed and talked, while she depended on the arm of Lord Atherley, who, if he had not, according to his own phraseology, "discussed claret enough to float a man of war," had discussed that which seemingly inspired him with spirits alive enough to affect love.

Dudley advanced towards the party, uncertain for the first time what might be his particular reception. The eyes of Lady Margaret wandered in every direction save towards him; though she had watched him from the first. Lord Atherley had seen him, but he thought it

better to keep Constance herself engaged till Dudley should absent himself. Constance's glance retained its usual kindly feeling, and, re-assured by her look, Dudley made direct for the party. Lady Margaret recognised him frankly enough, though she suffered him to approach almost close to her before she condescended to acknowledge him; fortunately, at that moment her attention was called away by a young French count, who was bowing and smiling, and uttering *mille graces*, and who, mistaking Lord Atherley for a relation, begged to be presented to my Lord Atherley.

Dudley approached Constance. He attempted to converse with his customary *ease*. She answered with embarrassment.

"Give me that bouquet you wear," said Ravensworth in a low voice, "in return for the one I presented to you last week."

With some hesitation she complied; yet she looked around that her mother's vigilant eye

might not observe her, and, taking it from her bosom, she gave it tremblingly into his hands. Lady Margaret now turned, and motioned Lord Atherley away, who immediately led Constance a promenade of the rooms.

At this moment the approach of several persons caused Dudley to give way, and he drew back,—leaving Lady Margaret to her newly-acquired friend. In the mean time several sets of dances had been performed, and the ball “rolled on;” but all seemed heat and glare, pain and oppression to Dudley; who felt his spirits broken, his hopes disheartened, except at times when they rose in the agony of positive desperation to something like the heedless reckless resolution of the madman. His tortures were destined however to be still further increased, when he saw Constance herself stand up to a quadrille, having by her side Lord Atherley.

“ She is dancing to-night then,” said Dudley

almost aloud, for he knew not at first what rules Lady Margaret had laid down for her daughter's conduct on the occasion. "Now then," he said, "'if heart *be* heart,' she will dance with me;" and just as the dance terminated he advanced directly to her, and made the request. Lord Atherley compressed his under lip, a visible sign with him of more than ordinary impatience. But the fears of Lord Atherley were unnecessary; Constance had already received her lesson.

"I am engaged, Mr. Ravensworth," she said, looking down.

"And to whom?" said Dudley, in a voice now subdued by excitement, driven as it were out of all the etiquette of society by the tortures he had endured.

"I mean," returned Constance, "that I shall not dance in the next set,—indeed, Mr. Ravensworth, to-night you must excuse me."

She would have added more,—but Lord

Atherley, with a scarcely suppressed sneer, here interfered, and led her, seemingly not unwilling, away from the spot.

"Am I upon the earth?" was the exclamation that involuntarily broke from Dudley, as the fond idol of his thoughts retreated without explanation, and even without apology, from his sight. "By heavens, some one must answer for this!" But the paroxysm of rage ended with the exclamation, and he remained pale and trembling, motionless as a statue, amidst the happy groups who neared and then disappeared from time to time before him.

"Had Sir Alexander ordered all this? Was he here? or was it the false fair one Lady Margaret with whom he had just exchanged the compliments of the evening, with all the apparent candour of a faithful well-wisher? or did Lord Atherley take upon himself to order that he should be repulsed?" It may be supposed that his wrath against Constance for

trifling with his feelings was unappeased and unappeasable. The more he dwelt upon the difference of her behaviour in their preceding meetings, the more angry as well as amazed he became at the change. No explanation of her conduct had been attempted. The multitude of his suspicions tended however to confuse his judgment, and he could only abandon himself to the misery of his present emotions, without endeavouring to do anything that might relieve him from the distractions that oppressed him.

There is nothing so uncongenial to the sorrowing heart as boisterous gaiety and mirth ; yet for a whole hour he remained gazing upon the figures of the dancers, as if they had been the phantasmagoria sometimes described in a magic lantern ; the music, beautiful as it was, sounded more like a dirge for departed happiness than as a symbol of pleasure and rejoicing. Whether Constance danced or did

not dance, was now of no moment to Dudley ; his eyes seemed immovable in his head, and burned with a heat which was almost excruciatingly painful.

The ball had now, however, begun to thin, the musicians' notes became faint and languid ; the wearied smile of the few remaining dancers showed evident signs of the lateness of the hour ; and Dudley, seeing all hope of favour at an end, turned with a stupified sensation of mingled sickness and grief to depart. He was passing onwards to the head of the stairs, the intoxicating strains of Weippert's inspiring harp had just ceased, when a soft voice whispered "Mr. Ravensworth !" In an instant the tempest ceased ; he looked up and beheld Constance, who, under the pretext of getting her handkerchief, which she had dropped, had separated herself from her mother. Overpowered by a thousand feelings, it was some little time before she could attempt

to speak. She looked round, as if to see that no one was near her, and then said, or rather stammered, “I cannot now attempt to explain. You know what feelings I always have with you, but —”

“Why so you say, Miss Graham?” said Dudley peevishly; “but really I begin to doubt your assertion. For you have always some excuse for not dancing with me.”

“Now this reproach is unkind.”

“Yet, nevertheless, it is true. There was a time, and not very distant either, when you gave me to understand you did not care about Lord Atherley; but wealth —”

“Do not—oh, do not be unjust!” replied Constance in an agitated manner; “I cannot bear it! I must go away,—you mistrust me.”

While they talked, Lady Margaret and Lord Atherley approached. There was no time for further remark or explanation.

“Say you forgive me,” said Dudley, the

deep low tone of his voice almost sinking to a whisper, as he drew back to let her pass.

The carriage was announced. "Constance, my love, take Lord Atherley's arm; get into the carriage, or they will drive off. We can take you home, Lord Atherley. Not the least crowded. We must set Mary down first in Palace Yard. My dear Mr. Ravensworth, I entreat you to come to my assistance. My cloak and shawl, No. 134. How very kind of you!"

Dudley, at that moment, was meditating how he could approach Constance. Lady Margaret's quick eye marked his discomfiture. To leave her and Miss Cressingham was out of the question; he was forced to offer his arm. Lord Atherley and Constance were at the bottom of the stairs, as the remainder of the party advanced. "Lady Margaret Graham's carriage stops the way!" echoed through footmen, constables, and link-boys. The carriage

being ready, Lord Atherley handed Constance in. It was impossible for her to hazard a remark without the certainty of being overheard by her mother or Lord Atherley. A low murmur of “ how unkind ! ” reached her ears, but it was drowned by the impatient coachman making his horses’ feet paw the ground to be gone.

Dudley, agitated, mortified, and grieved at having parted without one word of explanation or kindness, remained for a moment at the door. Constance,—her face averted and tongue motionless,—had sunk back in a corner of the carriage for a moment overcome ; then, reproaching herself for her apparent sullenness in having thus parted without taking leave, looked out anxious to recall her self-imagined unkind conduct, but it was too late. Dudley had turned away, and the horses were in motion. Constance continued to look—but in vain. She felt angry at heart, at having exposed herself to the harsh opinion

of one she valued, and the depressed Lady Margaret gave a loose current to her thoughts.

A stillness of some minutes ensued, during which Constance saw Lady Margaret's countenance assume a severe aspect ; at last in a voice of suppressed passion she said, "some different understanding with Mr. Ravensworth must be adopted to that you have pursued to-night : to-morrow in my dressing-room I will speak to you on the subject."

CHAPTER VI.

RETURN FRO ALMACK'S —GAMING HOUSE.

And if angels, trumpet-tongued, had told you I was false,
you should not have believed it.

EVADNE.

ON Ravensworth's return from Almack's, it was already broad daylight, though nothing was to be heard but the hoarse tone of a stray, half-sleeping watchman, and the occasional rattle of a carriage, or rumble of a coach, whose jaded horses were lazily dragging some drowsy senator from the oft-repeated, nocturnal wrangle of St. Stephen's,

to his whist club, through the now dreary and almost deserted streets, a solitary, bare-legged, half-naked chimney-sweep was crawling along, with brush in hand and soot bags on his back, emitting “S-w-e-e-p,” with a melancholy tone that struck the heart,—now a train of market-carts might be seen wending their way towards that great congress of the vegetable world, Covent Garden.

Dudley, who felt too much excited to seek the solitude of his wakeful pillow, rambled through the park, musing on the brilliant scene he had just left, now calculating the hours that must elapse before the next opera night or French play, when he should have a chance of seeing his “ladye love.” On reaching Piccadilly, his attention was unexpectedly, and somewhat forcibly arrested, by a miserable, half-starved looking creature, who, making a sudden halt directly before him, snatched the bouquet

from his breast, ere he had time to prevent her.

"It's a pretty flower, and still fresh," she said, holding it aside from the reach of Dudley: "but it will soon fade, like all the rest! but, here it's for you, Dudley Ravensworth, if you'll bid money for it;" and she looked the "excellent wretch" which love but too often makes of its infatuated devotees.

Dudley, though somewhat startled at his own name thus openly pronounced, and by one "so whistled down the wind to prey at fortune" by some despoiler,—attempted to move on, when the wretched girl, uttering a shrill and most agonising scream, exclaimed—

"Ay! but the time was when you would not have passed Jane Ashford, like a thing forsaken. But then it was where trees grew, and streams ran, and not in the stony-hearted streets!"

On hearing a name once sufficiently familiar to him, (for the Ashfords were tenants of Sir Alexander Graham,) Dudley made a dead halt, and, in the haggard figure before him, bedizened, as it was, with scanty and faded finery, which ill concealed the misery of her condition,—he recognised Isaac Ashford's daughter, Jane. Her face, indeed, despite its hollow eye, shrunken cheek, and shrivelled lips, showed that it had once possessed great beauty; but her scanty and tawdry apparel, already dripping in the drizzle of a rain which now began to fall, gave token of her present degradation, abandonment, and wretchedness.

Ashamed to be seen in company with one who, in addition to the squalid character of her appearance, seemed also to be labouring under the effects of recent inebriation, Dudley pulled out his purse and tablets, and, having given her some silver, was in

the act of taking down her address,—having, already, promised to call or send to her,—when, to his utter horror and dismay, the carriage of Lady Margaret Graham drove close to the spot where he and his disreputable acquaintance stood. It was in vain, therefore, for him to have attempted to make his escape from the prying, and, it must be confessed, somewhat astonished eyes of the party the carriage contained, however fervently he might have, on the instant, prayed for such a deliverance.

Already, and even before he could recognise whose carriage it was, Lady Margaret's quick eye had detected him in close converse with the outcast being we have just described,—and had let down the glass; and Constance's face, paler than usual, was next to be seen, looking at him with an expression of countenance which betrayed the agitation into which his appearance had thrown her. As the

carriage passed, she first looked anxiously to see if it was really him, and then fell back suddenly in her seat, apparently senseless. Lady Margaret, however, determined to keep her 'vantage ground ; she hastily pulled the string, and the horses were stopped. Dudley rushed forward to the carriage, just as Constance was gradually beginning to revive. But his services, whether in time or not, were not, it seems, to be accepted ; for Lady Margaret, with a voice almost unnaturally wild with anger, now requested Mr. Ravensworth not to insult them by calling the attention of all that was depraved to them.

Dudley tried to stammer out an apology ; but, at this very moment, his attention was called to a knot of hackney-coachmen, who, hustling round Jane, were in the act of endeavouring to deprive her of the money he had given her. Lady Margaret, therefore, desired the coachman to drive on ; and,

as they once more set forward, Constance gave a look, sad and reproachful, at Dudley, who, reckless of the consequences, had sprung to save Jane from the licensed depredators surrounding her.

After giving her over to the care of a watchman, Dudley, half-frantic at the possible consequences of the night's adventure, and bewildered with the thoughts of his own seeming depravity in the eyes of one who was the dearest and purest, turned away, and carried a distracted heart to a solitary home.

Shame, terror, and dismay, by turns, occupied Dudley's mind, as, pale, haggard, and exhausted, he strolled down St. James's Street, his eyes fixed despondingly on the pavement. He had not courage to enter his house; all disturbed, he could make up his mind to no resolution. He thought over the scene he had lately witnessed, recalling

to his mind, with fearful perspicuity, every circumstance connected with its mortifying and disagreeable details. While thus musing, he came in personal contact with a young man, muffled up in a military cloak, who, rushing out of a club-house, nearly threw down the abstracted lover.

“Sir!” cried Ravensworth, “do you mean to insult me?”

“A thousand pardons,” said the stranger meekly,—who was in fact the aggressor—and dropping his cloak.

“What, Harry Percival, my dear fellow!” exclaimed Dudley, holding out his hand to him. “I did not know that you were in London. When came you here?”

“I only arrived last night—ordered to join; but how fares it, Dudley? I thought we should never meet again. How very melancholy you look! in love or in debt?—

a Jew or a girl? — which is the harder-hearted?"

"A truce to your railleries; this is no time for them. Dine with me to-morrow, at seven, at the Clarendon," said Dudley.

"Agreed," replied Harry Percival: "but where do you lodge? — let us walk part of the way together?"

They walked together some moments in silence. Harry Percival laughed and jested with Dudley on his gravity; declared he was the dullest companion he had ever met, and vowed that there could be nothing more tiresome than a man in love.

Dudley assured him that such was not the case; a thousand things tended to make him low-spirited.

"Why what can depress you?" continued Harry, in a tone of mockery; "you with fair prospects: I, on the other hand, with no in-

come at all, but with debts, thick as the leaves that strew Mr. Milton's celebrated vale of Valambrosa. Talking of debts, I want your assistance, you will be an admirable witness: your sedate manner will just do. Do you know, Dudley, a rascally keeper of the infernal regions gave me a bad bill last night? Come in while I change it. Here's the house," he added, stopping at a door, over which a brilliant light, reflecting a No. 6, as big as a racket, "whose oily rays, shot from the crystal lamp," contrasted strongly with the dim appearance of the ill-lighted streets, for, in those days, oil had not succumbed to the supremacy of gas. People were then content to be but moderately enlightened.

At length they neared the interior of this second hall of Eblis, this infamous nocturnal receptacle for the most abandoned iniquity, where the arch fiend holds his horrid rites,

and feasteth on the destruction of his votaries. “*Noctes atque dies patet atrijanua Ditis.*” But we will not attempt to describe the mysteries of this iniquitous sink of pollution, where every angry and selfish passion is fed; where all that is useful, honourable, honest, and generous is extinguished; where every principle of active and disinterested kindness is violated; for its progress commences in idleness or avarice, proceeds in injustice, and terminates in inextricable despair.

Who can pourtray the various implements of ruin, or paint the ministers of vengeance glaring destruction at each other? What language can speak the deformity of nature, whilst every passion of the soul is upon the rack; the trembling anxiety of hope, the chilling damp of fear, fluctuating between the desperate alternative of impending affluence or of helpless beggary?—the wild and savage exultation, the ill-concealed triumph of the suc-

cessful ; the deep dismay, the curses, not loud, but deep, the half-suppressed oath, the cheek of livid paleness of the fallen ; some, like raging waters, foaming out their own shame in frantic oaths and execrations, others riveted to earth in the deep silence of unutterable despair ! Now is the wretched victim creeping homeward, reluctantly to pour into the ears of his wife the agonising tale of ruin. Mark his angry glance, his distorted countenance, his phrenzied agony ! How he starts ! His thought is the one that stings to madness. Then comes the cruel spoiler, flushed with the gain and glory of conquest. But envy him not : the bitter reflection that the misery of others has wrought his greatness " will put rancour in the vessel of his peace," and soon " commend the ingredients of the poisoned chalice to his own lips."

The room in which Dudley found himself was ill-lighted, for, in those days, Vice had

not become so illustrious, and required not a palace for her residence. The dingy walls and barred windows formed a *locale* well adapted to the things of crime and wretchedness with which it was filled. His blood ran cold, as he listened to the execrations that fell from the profane lips of those who, hardened by reckless vice, were staking all on “the hazard of the die.”

Dudley, disgusted at finding himself in this dismal den of depravity, was about to depart, when a sudden and vehement uproar at the door announced to him the arrival of the Bow Street officers. In an instant the candles were extinguished, and the infatuated crew made a general rush for escape: but the attempt was fruitless; Dudley, with his companions in disgrace, was carried off by the invaders, and passed the remainder of the night, or rather morning, in the watch-house. Dudley's appearance, his evening's dress somewhat disarranged,

was sufficiently forlorn : when brought up before the magistrate, those who were considered as players were dismissed with a caution : the owners were held to bail.

Dudley and Harry Percival, we may here explain, were acquaintances of some standing : they had entered Westminster at the same time, and having afterwards been thrown together at the houses of mutual friends and acquaintances, their boyish correspondence had been still permitted to continue. It has been said that people often love those who are in everything opposed to themselves, and this was true with respect to Percival and Dudley. Dudley was of a domestic disposition, and in the society of those whom he esteemed he found his happiness complete ; while Percival, as the gaming transaction may have already intimated, was of a reckless and hardy nature—careless of consequences, and one who ran neck or nothing into at least a few of the dissipations

of the day. Such as he was, however, he somehow or another held a place in Dudley's good graces ; and, indeed, he partly deserved this preference, since, whatever might be his faults, he was ever ready to stand fast in every extremity for a friend. He was, however, on the occasion of their present meeting half inclined to reform, having just entered the Guards ; but his intended reformation from his follies,—of which a visit to the gaming table had been the chief, was too late to be of any use to his friend. Dudley, while still smarting from the pain occasioned by Lady Margaret's contempt, and Constance's still more afflicting dismay at seeing him with Jane Ashford,—had the satisfaction of reading the next day, the following appalling paragraph :—

"GAMBLING IN HIGH LIFE."

"In consequence of private information being laid before Mr. Birnie at the public office, Bow Street, that gambling was carried on at a house in Pall Mall, his worship issued warrants for searching it. At a late hour on Wednesday night last, a large party of constables, and a number of the patrol, went to the house, and contrived to gain admittance by a back door. A company of about twenty gentlemen, assembled for the purpose of gambling, were taken by the officers to St. James's watch-house. Yesterday the parties attended before Mr. Birnie the sitting magistrate, when some were discharged, and the rest admitted to bail; among the former were Dudley Ravensworth Esq., son of Sir Francis Ravensworth, Bart., and H. Percival, Esq., Gds."

Dudley threw himself on his couch ; his long and tedious morning gave him ample time “to chew the cud of bitter fancies.” At length, he determined to present himself at Lady Margaret’s as early as possible in the day, and, one o’clock having arrived, he sprang into his Tilbury, and drove there with the utmost speed. On reaching the square, fear of ills to come made him reluctant to approach the door. At last, with a strong effort, he raised the knocker, the feeble irresolute rap was in unison with the doubtful uncertainty of his mind ; it was tardily obeyed by the porter, who disturbed at his dinner was some time before he answered a knock of so unimportant a character.

“ Is Lady Margaret at home ? ” inquired Ravensworth, in a low voice.

“ Mylady is at home, sir, but not well enough to receive any visitors. There was a note, sir, for you, which Miss Graham’s maid desired

might be sent early. "John!" addressing a half yawning footman, who from his appearance seemed to have emulated his prototype Sir Harry of "High life below stairs" celebrity in a "devil of a debauch" the evening before; "John! was Miss Graham's note left at Mr. Ravensworth's?"

"I really can't say, it's William's business; I only attend to her ladyship," replied the powder-headed, insolent knight of the shoulder knot.

This led to a skirmish of words between the two domestics.

Dudley was too much engrossed by his own thoughts to pay any attention to the above dialogue. His hopes seemed crushed; he threw down a card, and hastily quitted the door: to wait with patience for the following morning, which was the earliest period he could again present himself, was a resolve more easily made than performed.

Dudley returned home. For hours did he pace his apartment, discolouring his thoughts with the mischances of the previous night, and trying in vain to hope that fortune, under whose caprices he had suffered, would afford him an early opportunity of "explaining."

At three o'clock his servant entered with a salver bearing a scented satin-paper note, sealed with a delicate seal. The handwriting was not unknown to him. He looked at the note, first at the seal, then at the direction, surmising and apprehending what might be the contents, and with a painful fear to know them. At length he broke the little dot of wax, and read these few brief words addressed to himself:—

"After what occurred last Wednesday night, you will not be surprised that I am impelled to return your presents, which I am painfully sensible I ought never to

have accepted. I feel that a disregard of a dear mother's advice brings its own just punishment. Henceforth, we must be what the world calls 'friends.' That you may be happy will ever be the wish of

" CONSTANCE GRAHAM."

CHAPTER VII.

VISIT AND DEATH OF JANE ASHFORD.

Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !
Sure these denote one universal joy !
Are these thy serious thoughts ? Ah ! turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shiv'ring female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest ;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn ;
Now lost to all, her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores the luckless hour,
When, idly, first ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.

GOLDSMITH.

JANE ASHFORD was the daughter of respectable parents. Her father, Isaac Ashford, had

been for many years gamekeeper to Sir Alexander Graham. She had been tenderly reared and educated in the family of the Grahams, who, shortly after her mother's death, provided her with a situation in the establishment of a respectable milliner. Ashford was doubtless fond of his daughter; but he was by nature a stern man, and Jane lived more in awe than love of him. She was unhappy enough to attract the attention of an officer quartered in the neighbourhood.

It is a grateful theme to speak of woman in her purity, diffusing happiness, tempering the rude nature of man; but it is lamentable to think of her as the crushed flower on the path of innocence. Yet such was Jane's fate. She was a confiding, credulous being, and too soon forgot the precepts of her mother, and the kindness of her benefactress, Constance. The pair had met in secret; and these clandestine meetings, which began in mere gaiety

, on her part, ended in bringing her to shame and disgrace. Under a promise of marriage, and confiding implicitly in the man who had appeared the most generous and disinterested of her friends, she had at first listened, and at last yielded to his base seductions ; and she fled, lost and distracted, from her father's house to the care of her reckless betrayer. The consequence of her fatal love became but too soon apparent ; and the affection and attention of him to whom she had sacrificed purity and peace diminished in proportion to the advanced claim which her hapless situation made upon them. Hers was but one of the many cases of unescaped perils of women, the result of which Crabbe with all his truth and pathos so well describes :—

“ Then came the day of shame, the grievous night,
The varying look, the wandering appetite,
The joy assumed while sorrow dimm'd the eyes,
The forced sad smiles that follow'd sudden sighs ;
And every art long used, but used in vain,
To hide thy progress, Nature, and thy pain.”

Isaac Ashford, with a heart broken in its pride, demanded justice of the spoiler, who basely denied his guilt, and, hinting suspicions of another lover, recommended him to urge his daughter to espouse one who ought to save her character by making her a wife.

The demand of reparation by such a marriage was scornfully disdained. In the meantime the beguiler, who was a handsome young man, talked to Jane of love and marriage, professed the most ardent devotion, vowed constancy and fidelity, and promised to marry her at the death of his father.

The lover,—if such a title may be abused,—the creature that had betrayed this poor girl, departed, imploring her to be patient, and pledged himself speedily to return, and fulfil his word — a word, broken when it was given.

Days, weeks, and months stole on. She became a mother without a mother's honoured name. She lived upon hope, that the next

and the next day would bring her her heart's restoration; but it came not; and when does Time persuade Happiness not to use its wings?

"Where time has ploughed, there misery loves to sow."

Jane awoke from the long delirium, and contemplated with horror the prospect of her future life; she twice wrote imploringly to her seducer, but never received an answer; her importunities had made him angry. She applied in person to his father, but was driven from the house with brutal coldness; when she reached her father's roof, it was a roof for her no longer; she was refused admittance—her good name gone! her care an Ossa pile upon her heart!

Without home, without friends, the wretched girl wandered forth upon a wide world, with poverty for her companion—misery for her guide,—and death for her only friend at the end of travel!

"Throughout the lanes she glides at evening's close,
And softly lulls her infant to repose ;
Then sits and gazes, but with viewless look,
As gilds the moon, the rippling of the brook ;
And sings her vespers, but in voice so low,
She hears their murmurs as the waters flow ;
And she too murmurs, and begins to find
The solemn wanderings of a wounded mind :
Visions of terror, views of woe succeed
The mind's impatience to the body's need ;
By turns to that, by turns to this, a prey,
She knows what reason yields, and dreads what madness
may."

Shortly after this period, Ashford quitted the neighbourhood, and took a small farm on the borders of Essex; part of the property that had been Lady Margaret Graham's marriage portion. Here he broke out into every species of dissipation. Fairs, bull-baits, the cock-pit, race-courses, gaming-booths, pot-houses became his constant haunts; in a few months he was nearly penniless. The farmhouse fell into a dilapidated state,—the windows became broken, and stopped with old

rags and paper; and it was clear that the “palsied hand of ruin” was upon the house.” The farm-house was neglected; great crops of thistles and weeds were its produce. Barn-doors broken off, fences pulled down, met the eye at every turn.

Fortunately for Ashford, there resided in his parish a pastor, a faithful pastor, one of the most kind-hearted and pious individuals of whom the church of England had cause to boast; the Reverend Mr. Palmeter. He was not only on the sabbath-day a clergyman, but was the minister of God seven days in the week; daily and hourly was he employed in his Christian duties, visiting the sick and distressed. He had been made acquainted with the cause of Ashford’s misery, and had done all in his power to alleviate it. He had in a great measure reclaimed the wretched man, now suffering under illness brought on by his intemperate habits. Upon Dudley’s discovery

of Ashford's daughter, he had addressed the clergyman, who lost no time in urging the miserable father to accompany him to London.

It was on the evening of a dirty, drizzling, rainy day, when the dusk was just closing in, that Ravensworth, accompanied by Isaac Ashford, left his cabriolet in Long Acre, and proceeded on foot through a maze of dark and winding courts, lanes, and alleys, to within a very short distance of Drury Lane. They went on in profound silence. Nothing could exceed the filth and misery of the alley they had now entered. The houses were a closely-packed double row of miserable dwellings, crowded to excess by a population chiefly composed of the lowest class of Irish. The windows were broken, dismal, and patched. The gutter, impure and choked up, filled the jaded atmosphere with noisome odours. Poles, with lines for drying clothes, projected across the court,

on which were hanging the ragged garnments of the impoverished inhabitants. One solitary lamp, cased round with wire-work to prevent its constant breakage, cast a dim light upon the narrow pavement. Here some half-naked children and famished cats and curs were grovelling in dirt and play; there, on the cold, damp door-step, might be seen some wild and houseless women, in the last stage of human misery, premature victims of vice and profligacy; torrents of vituperation poured from their lips, and a shout of drunken mirth ever and anon issued from more than one den of depravity. A low, half-stifled moan of some famished mother, and her sickly infant clamouring for bread, was now caught, and the curses of the *husband* and *father* broke forth with the fever-lust of drink raging in his brain and red encircled eye, as he staggered out to spend his wife's hard earnings at the gin-shop. Shrieking, roaring, swearing, and sounds of quarrel-

ling in the madness of outrageous drunkenness, issued from every quarter.

"The house should be somewhere here," said Dudley, consulting his tablets, and rapping loudly at a crazy door. There was no answer. He repeated the knocking, and began to imagine the house to be totally uninhabited, when he perceived the glimmering of a light through the crevice of a window.

"Holloa ! Who's there ?" cried a voice from above. "Don't stand knocking ! Come in."

Ravensworth, now perceiving that the door stood ajar, pushed it open, and, followed by Ashford, proceeded to grope the way down a broken stair to a back out-house on the ground floor, and from which a small flickering light glimmered through the crannies. They were within a step or two of the door, when a miserable and emaciated girl came forth.

"Are you the gentlemen that were expected?" said the girl.

"Yes—yes!" replied Ravensworth.

"This way, please sir."

"Mary!" cried a voice gruffly, and which Dudley recognised as the one that had addressed him from the window, "go in. Give me the candle. I'll go and talk to the *gentlemen*."

A glance sufficed to convince Ravensworth that the expression of vulgar defiance, the dogged look, the air of obstinate determination marked him as the "superior" of this nursery of misery.

"My good man, we wish to see your lodger Mrs. Richards," said Dudley, in a tone of conciliation.

"See her! first pay her lodging—two weeks' rent due," replied the man.

"Here," said Ravensworth, taking out his purse; "what's your demand?"

"Why," replied the man, "rent, board, firing, medicine—a pound will do it."

"There, then, take it, and let us see her."

"Well, walk on; but you may as well pay for her funeral at once, for she's as good as dead," replied the unfeeling villain, still eyeing Ravensworth's purse.

Disgusted with the ruffian's brutal demeanour, he hastily entered the cellar, when a scene of wretchedness presented itself that baffles description. The cutting easterly wind wifed its way through the dilapidated walls which were here and there darkened with spots damp) of a bare and miserable room, destitute of furniture; the rain beat through the broken casement, while a woful fire of two damp logs, portions of an old water-tub, gave no warmth to the decay. A rushlight stuck in a bottle threw a faint flicker over the chamber, adding to, rather than diminishing, its air of desolation. A woman, the owner of the

house, who seemed completely soured by poverty, was warming some gruel, while her two squalid children were quarrelling for a piece of most ancient bread.

In one corner, extended upon a miserable pallet, covered with a blanket of unspeakable hue, Ashford beheld his daughter, pale and emaciated! Death was plainly at "her side!" The melancholy change which illness had occasioned had scarcely left a trace of her former beauty; and those charms, which had been so strikingly and fatally attractive, were no longer visible to human eyes. Disease and want were graven on her countenance, and she was cold, white, and inanimate as a statue. There was a silence of some minutes, and at length a partial consciousness came faintly over her. She knew the presence of her parent.

"Oh, my injured father!" feebly exclaimed the dying Jane, "can you forgive the wretch who has occasioned you all this?—all—all

this? and look with kindness on your abandoned child? Yes," continued she, gasping as she faintly uttered those words,—“ I see that I am pardoned; but tell me, father, what may I hope for from that awful tribunal to which I am hastening? Is there mercy for a late penitent?”

The afflicted man attempted to compose and soothe her. Her eyes rekindled for a moment; she seized his hand, and pressed it fervently against her bosom; her breathing became more difficult, her hands more cold; the poor thing gradually relaxed her hold, and falling back, seemed with one low sad long breath, to sigh herself from a world which had been so long deaf to her.

Dudley, leaving Ashford with his dead child, had just reached the end of the alley, when a gust of wind, carrying with it a mass of dust and rubbish, induced him suddenly to turn round to avoid the nuisance. While thus

running, he fancied he perceived the figures of two men who, to all appearance were dodging his steps. Resuming his walk with a somewhat uncertain air of alarm, and anxious to ascertain the fact, Ravensworth every now and then turned his head to see if he was followed; where at his great surprise he perceived that his undesirable companions still maintained the same distance from him, as when he first observed them. Passing on with speed, he made towards the spot where he had left his cabriolet; but with difficulty he unwound the tangled alleys and passages which led to it. Now and then a solitary lamp shewed him his follower, in whom vice and ruffianism were written in characters not to be misunderstood or mistaken.

They approached him, and before he could call for assistance, or prepare for defence of himself, he found that he was encircled by a pair of athletic arms, and that other hands

were busy about his pockets. So sudden and effectual was the attack, that even had Ravensworth been prepared, it would have been impossible to have resisted. In a moment his watch and purse were seized. At that instant two officers of the night approached and secured one of the assailants, but not until after a severe struggle.

The following afternoon, the newspapers, after giving the police report, indulged in remarks upon the aristocratic pursuits of Dudley Ravensworth, Esq., in Giblet Alley :— hinting that a certain frail fair one was the Circé that attracted him there, and winding up the coloured details with the usual moral reflections on the dangers attendant upon the but too prevalent habits of depravity, amongst those whose education and station in life should lead to better and purer pursuits. This, his second appearance under disgraceful circumstances in a public newspaper, completed Dud-

ley's apparent disgrace. He had intended to give Lady Margaret, and, in particular, he had intended to offer Constance an explanation of his meeting with Jane Ashford ; and he had hoped to have modified the indignation of the one, as well as re-assured the shattered confidence of the other, by an honest detail of the circumstances. But Constance's note, and the publicity of the gambling events, overturned all his resolutions ; he appeared to himself to be too far lost in the estimation of the Grahams to hope to effect an impression upon them, feeling that they must consider him both abandoned and degraded. What, therefore, was left to him ? He could not rest in England. In other scenes he felt that he must seek relief from the aspersions which had been cast upon his character ; and though he yielded to the conviction, that happiness was not to be connected with his fate,—he could better bear the land and the society of strangers, than to

remain where he might encounter only those who would avoid and despise him. Having got through the necessary preparations for a lengthened tour, of which he had chosen Vienna for its object, Dudley very shortly set out with a weary heart on his course of self-enforced exile.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARY CRESSINGHAM'S CHARACTER.

Ah, me ! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear, by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

It had been Harry Percival's fortune, in early life, to save the life of Mary Cressingham. Walking one day near Kensington Gardens, his solitary reflections were broken in upon by the sound of a carriage which approached at a furious rate, and, turning round, he beheld a lady and a gentleman

seated in a curriicle, with which the horses were running away with ungovernable fury. At a short distance, following it, were two grooms, who unthinkingly pursued the vehicle at full gallop, and, by urging the horses, hastened the very catastrophe which they wished to avert. Percival sprang forward, and, seizing the furious animals, succeeded in stopping them, just as they were making for the river, from which a very brief space separated them.

Mary Cressingham was the only daughter of Colonel Cressingham, a soldier of fortune, or, rather, of no fortune, for he inherited no patrimony: he had served many years in the army, and possessed only a small income, derived from his pay, and a trifling pension. Her mother, a sister of Sir Alexander Graham, had died while Mary was but an infant; and Lady Margaret, the aunt of Mary, had contrived that she should be educated with her own daughter. The cou-

sins, therefore, grew up together till Mary had attained an age at which it was thought proper to recall her to preside over her father's household. A correspondence was, however, maintained between the cousins, which tended to keep alive their early feelings of affection. In some respects, a great similarity existed between them ; for both were young, both handsome, both accomplished. In conversation Mary was charming ; there was no effort, save that of accommodating herself upon all occasions to the capacity of those with whom she happened to converse. In order to induce others to entertain an imaginary confidence in their own superiority, she frequently affected utter ignorance upon subjects of which she was much better informed than those whom she lured into a belief of superiority. Listening with patience and apparent interest to remarks the most common-place and prosaic, she never allowed a sarcasm or a sneer to escape her lips or looks. She

was all ease and sprightliness of manner when she must have been worn out in spirit. One would have said that there was a certain degree of *espièglerie* visible in the tact with which the unsuspecting were drawn into the network prepared for their vanity. But if Mary did enjoy an inward pleasure in inveigling into her toils the unwary and the vain, she carefully concealed her triumph from the victims of her skill. She allowed them to indulge in all the pleasure of an innocent delusion, and rather fostered than disturbed the flattering slumber of sense into which she had lulled them. Of what consequence was it, then, that the self-complacent had been vanquished, if the chains which bound them were, to their eyes, enwreathed with laurels ? The meshes in which they were entangled, the prison-bars within which they were enclosed, were, in their eyes, garlands of roses, and aureoles of fame. Who, then, could chide the am-

bition of that gentle conqueror, so skilful in war, so clement in victory? Miss Cressingham also assumed to speak with humility of the attainments of her sex, when she must have felt that, in intellectual power, she was vastly superior to nine-tenths of the men with whom she conversed. This arose, not from affectation, but from sincere simplicity of character. She shrank from making others sensible of her mental superiority; she loved to stoop her wing, and to live, for a time, in a less elevated region of the mind; to delight and gladden those who were unable to visit the heights to which her own intellect could raise her: there was about her an air of mysterious uncertainty, a mixture of reality and ideality which rendered it difficult to determine her precise character: there was much truth, but also much fancy; much that was sincere, much that was imaginative; there was always talent, and often brilliancy, but it was not easy on every occa-

sion to decide between that which was literal and that which was playful.

In entering the lists with an adversary so gifted, and occasionally so wayward, every one felt a degree of insecurity as to the nature of the warfare in which he was about to engage: it was not possible to know whether the lances were fashioned for pastime or conflict; whether it was to be a harmless joust, or one à l'outrance. We should have been apt to distrust our own opinions and impressions on this subject, were it not that we have heard others express a similar opinion.

"Mary would be delightful," say some, "if we could but tell when she was in jest and when in earnest." Those who felt disposed to quarrel with her on this score should have recollect ed, that what they imputed to the caprice of a gallant and wayward spirit, might find a home in the quiet recesses of their own dulness. If dull men will converse with

talented women, they must make up their minds to be generally victimised. If people will attempt Icarus flights, they will find out the weakness of the wing, and must endure an Icarus fate.

It was impossible to look on Mary's countenance without feeling, or rather fearing, that she was not so happy as she deserved to have been. At times she walked under a shadow. If, however, she had sorrows, she treasured them up in her own bosom; and you saw but faint traces of their shades pass over her features. She gave to others the happiness which was not always unalloyed in her own breast; and, whenever she felt a depression herself, she was more generous and profuse of kindness to others. To be a friend to her parent was a passport to her good regards.

Though agreeing in several points of resemblance, the cousins were still in many respects

essentially different. Constance was a blonde; Mary, though far from a brunette, was perhaps equally far from the character of a blonde: Constance's form was slender and sylph-like; Mary's, with equal grace, had more volume.

As compared with her cousin, one might observe that the temperature of Constance's mind was more easily constant. The range of the mental thermometer was not so great; its variations were not so violent; her mind was more even in its course, her feelings more under command, her temper more equable than that of Mary. Mary had all the fire of genius, with somewhat of its inconstancy; its spirit mingled with the life-blood that flowed in her veins, and quickened and disturbed the pulsations of her heart. Constance, with scarcely less of talent, had less activity of mind; was more tranquil, though she was not less energetic of purpose. Mary possessed

a quick and delicate perception, an exquisite sensibility, and a deep insight into all the lights and shadows of human life; she could at once appreciate the precise value to be attached to the pretensions of others. Her feelings were more acute than those of Constance. And yet, what was lost in composure of mind was perhaps gained in warmth of heart. Constance was less the creature of impulse than her cousin; in her whole conduct of life she was more influenced by judgment than fancy; her actions were the result of deliberation rather than the offspring of instant creation; she seemed ever under the sway of a strict moral discipline.* There may have been inward struggle and commotion, but strife (if strife there were,) never reached the surface.

This digression upon the two cousins is already too long, but enough has been said to account for a young man of Harry Percival's

age falling desperately in love with so amiable a being as Mary Cressingham.

If gratitude and esteem are good foundations of affection, Mary's feelings will be neither improbable nor faulty. She loved—deeply, hopelessly loved. In the privacy of her chamber she in vain tried to school her heart to conquer this feeling; but still each day increased the admiration for him, and it required a constant effort on the part of the unhappy girl to conceal the love which had become rooted in her pure and fresh feelings. Despite of all her caution, her father had remarked that for some time there had evidently been a weight upon her spirits,—some hidden care seemed to prey upon her mind,—some deep-rooted grief had plunged her in a state of despondency. With the greatest kindness Colonel Cressingham spoke to his daughter upon the subject, entered fully into her feelings, and deplored the poverty that must place an inseparable bar

against her union with Percival; and, feeling that change of scene would be of material service in dispelling her gloom, finally arranged that they should leave England for the Continent.

CHAPTER IX.

MARRIAGE SETTLED. LORD AHERLEY.

Marriage is a matter of more worth
Than to be dealt in by attorneyship ;
For what is wedlock forced but a hell,
An age of discord and continual strife ?

SHAKSPEARE—*Henry VI.*

The intelligence of Dudley's departure for the Continent reached Graham Castle through the common vehicle of similar occurrences, the newspapers. As Lady Margaret thought she might now venture to indulge in the utmost effort of her malice towards Dudley, without any fear of danger, she did not fail to propa-

gate the scandalous reports that he had been detected in *an affair* with Jane Ashford, the gamekeeper's daughter; that he had been the means of sending her affianced, Mark Luton, abroad, to avoid the obloquy that the exposure of so base a design would subject him to; his affair, too, with Harry Percival at the gaming-house was greatly exaggerated,—as was his visit to the dying Jane.

These rumours, blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures, came to the ears of Constance. Day followed day, week followed week, months passed away, and no letters arrived to gladden her spirits. She sank, and deeply she felt the misery of that hope deferred, which is truly said to make the heart sick.

Lady Margaret had witnessed the childish attachment with Dudley; but for some time had not the remotest idea that Constance had any influence over the mind of her youthful admirer. To make use of a commonplace ex-

pression, Lady Margaret had set her mind upon a match to which we have before alluded, and had done everything in her power to forward it. She had fully weighed the matter,—she had summoned up all her *pros* and *cons*. Lord Atherley was, first and foremost, a peer of the realm, and moreover was a man of high moral character, and was enormously rich;—Dudley Ravensworth was but a younger son, detrimental, only fit to hold shawls and call carriages. In the event of his elder brother's death without issue, he would eventually be a baronet. But had the balance been even, selfishness and self-aggrandisement would have turned the scale.

Lady Margaret felt that she herself would receive much more consideration from, and have greater influence over, a man of Lord Atherley's easy temper and quiet character, than over one of Ravensworth's fashionable habits. When the thought once entered her

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... was the day to her now. Every effort was exerted in the singer's manner, the language, the meaning, the meaning—all were for a last effort, she applied to Sir Alexander, who was immediately summoned by messenger.

"Do you, Sir Alexander, approve of a daughter's flying in the face of her parents?"

"Certainly not, my dear," was the ready reply of the timid Baronet.

"Well, then, Sir Alexander, circumstances have lately been, and are daily forcing upon me a situation which, for all my feelings as a wife and parent, I think it right to communicate to you. If my attachment has ripened at present between Constance and Mr. Ravensworth there is every appearance of one existing and growing up."

"Indeed, my dear?" replied the husband, in a tone of very awe.

"It is true. Mr. Ravensworth has left Eng-

land, but he may shortly return and we are bound to be cautious."

"Certainly, my dear."

"This idle fancy," continued Lady Margaret, "is really quite ridiculous. Constance is so fastidious, that it is impossible to please her."

"I never imagined she liked Mr. Ravensworth," said Sir Alexander, without raising his eyes from the table; "but as it seems I am mistaken, why—"

"Exactly, Sir Alexander," interrupted Lady Margaret. "You will of course see her upon the subject, and point out the imprudence of encouraging such an attachment; — that although it is not our wish that she should sacrifice her inclinations, it is a duty she owes to us and to herself to put an end to an affair that must be highly detrimental to her, and painful to our feelings. You understand, Sir Alexander?"

Sir Alexander did understand. Constance was summoned to the presence of her master, who sat *in banco*, with all the dignity of a court of *one*. As she entered, he said,—

“ My dear Constance, I have a matter of much importance to communicate to you. It is one in which your interests are greatly involved.”

To this opening harangue Constance attentively listened, without understanding its purport.

“ I have been thinking, my dear child, out wishing to control your affections, of Lord Atherley, who seeks to unite himself to you. Sir Alexander stammered, “ with an amiable,—virtuous,—and intelligent companion, —and friend.” Here Sir Alexander gathered courage, as he laid before his trembling daughter the letter which Lord Atherley had addressed to Lady Margaret, and which Constance now hastily perused. “ We think

newed the Baronet, "Lord Atherley is in every way calculated to enlarge the scene of *your*, indeed, I may add, of *our* happiness, by a befitting marriage."

Constance sighed, and but thought of Dudley. Her colour changed, as she replied, "You have a right, I presume, to decide, in all things, over my destiny."

Sir Alexander then proceeded. "Neither he nor Lady Margaret wished to compel; they had no desire to exercise parental authority; they only wished to guide her inexperienced inclinations and resolves."

Constance looked anxiously at her father. "You have always been an indulgent parent, I do not doubt; but—" here she faltered.

Sir Alexander continued. "Lord Atherley is in every respect calculated to make you an unobjectionable, nay, desirable husband. He proposes presenting himself here immediately."

truth, of virtue, and of wisdom; when she traced the weary sleepless nights, the anxious watchings and incessant care, the love and tenderness of a parent's fondness, which knew no bounds; she felt that cold and callous must be that heart that did not cherish every feeling of respect, gratitude, and veneration to her to whom she owed her existence, and all that protected and enlightened it. Yet she shuddered, as she thought of Lord Atherley! Unaccustomed herself to deceive, she did not dream of suspecting others, particularly those she loved, of deceiving her. She believed all to be, like herself, actuated by noble impulses, scorning to attain the object of their most cherished wishes by base or sinister means. She walked about the room; deliberated, determined; wavered and deliberated again. Her mind was at war with itself. "Oh, that my mortal course were ended!" exclaimed Constance, in all the bitterness of her anguish;

and then, after a short abandonment to intense grief, her better reason triumphed.

But it is useless to dwell upon her train of sad thoughts. The repeated attempts to move her to a determination, which was held out to her as an honourable sacrifice to duty, were not long unattended with an approach to success. Urged on every side, and worked upon by those she loved, her scruples gave way (though not without a severe struggle) before the arguments and expostulations of her parents, and she at last consented to bestow her hand, though her heart was far away. Thus the matrimonial scheme, so zealously advocated by Lady Margaret, had been successful. And had the mother no pang of remorse, no misgivings in crushing her offspring's young affections in their early bud ; in interfering in that upon which the whole happiness of a life depends ; in, perhaps, entailing regret and misery, from which there is no absolution but

death, and thus adding her to the victims sacrificed to what the world calls parental prudence? No; she reasoned with the common sophistry. "That it was her duty to extinguish her child, that it was for her real welfare, that she would soon forget her first preference; and that she was wholly and solely actuated by a due and motherly regard for her daughter's interest."

Constance was ill at ease during the ~~and~~ preparations, so generally interesting to the ~~rest~~. She had obeyed an impulse, but her conscience, that self-approving, or self-condemning judge —whispered "I do not love him!" Happy would it have been, had she but possessed one friend to tell her, that endless sorrow and untold regrets would be her portion,—if, with a true attachment for one man, she approached the altar to proclaim her fealty to another. She had yielded to the wishes, the almost arbitrary mandates of her mistaken parents. Yet she

felt that she had been unfaithful to one whom she had discouraged rather than discarded—a pang of self-upbraiding wrung her, as the hour approached that placed a bar of eternal separation between Dudley and herself.

Lady Margaret's mansion in Grosvenor-square had now begun to assume that busy joyous aspect which precedes a fashionable marriage. Lawyers, milliners, jewellers, coachmakers, confectioners, trustees, &c. &c., crowded the house. The tables were covered with drafts of settlements, plans for new carriages, sketches of new settings for the union of the Graham and Atherley diamonds. Nothing that could dazzle her imagination, awaken her ambition, or gratify her vanity by the most splendid presents was left undone; and the affair proceeded, as is customary in the beau monde, rather by the agency of parents and friends than by any advances on the part of the bridegroom elect. The law's delay is proverbial, and there can be

no doubt, that the legal profession are all looked upon as an extremely tedious race by persons placed in Lord Atherley's situation. He devoted his days to law and Lincoln's Inn. Constance (dragged by her mother) lived but with *modistes* and *costurières*. At length the settlements were completed, the equipages finished, and the wedding paraphernalia sent home.

It was Constance's wedding day. All the connections of both families were invited, and carriages were rolling rapidly in the direction of St. James's church. Constance stood before the glass, arrayed in her bridal attire. Mary Cressingham, (who had returned to England for her cousin's wedding,) had placed the wreath of orange flowers upon her head, and arranged the rich point veil which was to hide the blushes and tremors of the bride. Constance remained like a statue, though strong emotions were gathering within her. Her eyes were fixed

upon her mother. Recollections of former years came over her. Her heart sank within her. Perhaps she should never again return to that house, as a dweller therein ; she looked round the room in which she had experienced all her young fresh feelings of sorrow and joy, —she felt as if she should be stifled.

"It is time for us to move," said her mother. Constance rose and walked to the window—she checked her rising tears. We will not stop to describe the *trousseau*—blonde,—bridesmaids, —corbeilles,—flowers,—wedding favors which were too often typical of the bridegroom's smiles ; bright but transient,—worn in public for a few days, then thrown aside to be seen no more. All were *selon les règles*, and merited the panegyrics in which the Morning Post exceeded its usual eloquence. It may be best to say the hour arrived, never had a brighter morning shone. "Happy is the bride the sun shines upon," is an adage.

Almond for the sacrifice, the envied vicar
presented to St. James's Church to be married
with the power of a special license and a bisho~~p~~
Lady Margaret was in the vestry with
her bridesmaids, attended by her bridesmaids as
friends, leaning on Sir Alexander's arm. Con-
stance was led up the aisle to the altar. A
concourse was beginning with pride and exulta-
tion. He felt the tremor of her arm, but
looked composed—

"A smile on her neck will appear
Throbbing now,—and it is won."

The awful words were spoken "in sickness and
in health to love, cherish and obey till death do
us part."

"At each response the sacred rite requires
From her fair bosom bursts the unbidden sigh—
A strange mysterious awe the scene inspires,
And on her lips the trembling accents die."

Constance had surrendered her happiness—

the earnest persuasions of her ambitious mother. The merry chimes announced that the ceremony was over. She had received her father's last embrace and parting blessing; friendly congratulations had passed; kind wishes were breathed; the breakfast went off as well as such fêtes usually do, where society is brought together from necessity, not choice; nothing was talked of but the beauty and grace of the young bride, and, Constance having changed her bridal dress for a more suitable travelling attire, the "happy pair" left in a travelling chariot and four for Compton Audley.

CHAPTER X.

VIENNA.

Oh! for some fairy talisman to conjure
Up to those longing eyes the form they pine for!
And yet in love there's no such word as absence;
The loved one, like our guardian spirit, walks
Beside us ever—shines upon the beam—
Perfumes the flower, and sighs in every breeze!
Its presence gave such beauty to the world
That all things beautiful its likeness are;
And nought is sound most sweet, to sight most fair,
Reaches with its voice, or like its aspect smiles.

BULWER.

Strange sight this Congress! destined to unite
All that's incongruous, all that's opposite.
I speak not of the Sovereigns—they're alike,
A common coin as ever mint could strike:
But those who sway the puppets, pull the strings,
Have more of morday than their heavy kings;
Jews, authors, generals, charlatans combine,
While Europe wonders at the vast design.—BYROS.

DUDLEY was now progressing slowly towards the Austrian capital, for unlike the generality of British tourists on the Continent, who get over the most ground in the smallest time imaginable, Ravensworth, more for the sake of his companion than himself, stopped to see every place worthy of note. The excitement of travelling is only excitement to the idle and unoccupied; but to those whose thoughts are filled with one anxious and importunate subject, all that the traveller can recognise is but the changing objects of an enlarged and peopled panorama. Life, indeed, is in it; but it is life that has no sympathies in common with those of the gazer. The present was filled with the pangs of parting, for an unlimited time, with her he loved best. The effort of travelling, therefore, though it forced Dudley into active exertion, and interrupted the melancholy reflections, which, like clouds driven before the winds in a tempest, chased one

another in succession through his mind, produced, however, but a trifling lull of relief—one thought, one soul-absorbing thought, perpetually haunted his remembrance. At Brussels neither the gaiety nor interest there felt at the return of the family of the Prince of Orange, could in the least beguile him. In vain his companion tried to rouse him by fighting over again the battle of Bergen op Zoom—that fatal enterprise, wherein Skerret, the intrepid defender of Tariffa, led the attack and fell; where Gore, Mercer, Carleton, M'Donald fell; where three hundred were killed and eighteen hundred wounded; and which attack, though it promised at the onset complete success,—failed in the end, from the loss of the principal officers of the right column, which occasioned it to fall into disorder, and from the left column being weakened by the loss of a detachment of guards, cut off by the enemy. In vain his

present chronicler gave a fresh recital of the siege of Pampeluna, where he had figured in a *corps de réserve* stationed at some three and a half leagues distant.

Dudley listened indeed, and in some degree felt grateful for the good intentions of his friend, since he probably imagined that those hours which are occupied — however trifling may be the nature of the occupation — pass easier by, than those in which the mind is left unrelieved from the pressure of its own immediate recollections. Fortunately, however, his military spirit was not dead, and perhaps at no period of time was the profession of arms so honourable. The war, at first originating in the sanguinary strife of the revolutionary mob of Paris, carried on with almost uninterrupted succession for nearly a quarter of a century, had gradually involved the whole of Europe in its whirlpools. Napoleon had arisen in the midst of it, and kingdoms and principalities

had changed masters through his instrumentality. But the tide of success had been felt to turn at Moscow ; and now the prostrate nation, no longer supported by his policy or broken by his power, were arising and revenging their many wrongs, and the terrible battle of Leipzig had been followed by the dethronement of the revolutionary Emperor, and the Congress of crowned heads was now assembled at Vienna.

Vienna is that concentrating point where Greeks, Turks, Jews, and Italians meet, for the arrangement of their mercantile affairs throughout the Continent of Europe. There you are constantly struck with the number and varieties of characters which you daily meet. The Greek and Albanian, with their short cloaks edged with sable and ermine, delicately-trimmed mustachio, and exposed throat. Long robes trimmed with tarnished gold or silver, with thickly-folded girdles and turbans, and

ds of unrestrained growth, point out the
stic Turk. The olive-tinted visage, with a
keen, dark eye, and a costume half Greek
half Turkish, distinguish the citizen of
ice or Verona.

avensworth soon found himself a welcome
t in the imperial circle, and in the brilliant
ies of the Esterhazys and Schwartzenbergs.
days were passed in morning drives to the
er and Aungarten, in the promenade of the
tpart and Belvedere Gardens; in evening
mblies, select dinners, splendid balls, *petits*
vers, theatrical representations.

he gay and busy appearance of Vienna,
led with sovereigns, ambassadors, minis-
and generals; its bustling activity; the
ts crowded with people, groups of military
ding the city; the balconies filled with
spectators; beating of drums, firing of
ons, ringing of bells;—all were vivid and
iant. Much interesting matter was acces-

sible to a lover of the fine arts; the gallery of the Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen, the imperial collection of paintings at the Belvedère, the private cabinets of Prince Esterhazy, Liechtenstein, Schönborn, and Count Lamberg.

Dudley visited the two arsenals, the city and the imperial one; in the former is preserved the head of Kara Mustapha, who conducted the siege of 1683, and was strangled the year after at Belgrade by the Sultan's order; and in the latter are to be seen memorials of many great men, the armour of the celebrated crusader, Godfrey of Bouillon, the servant of the Holy Temple; of Frederic Barbarossa, and the Emperor Charles the Fifth; the leatheren jacket and the hat worn by the great Gustavus Adolphus when he was killed at the battle of Lützen; the helmet of Prince Eugene of Savoy, the brother warrior of Marlborough; the balloon used by the French at the battle of

Fleurus in 1793 ;—all were here ! Dudley forgot the present in the past. His mind presented to his imagination the enthusiastic multitude, governed by a pious though mistaken zeal, devoting their lives and their fortunes to the recovery of the sacred city from the hands of the Paynim. He heard the voice of the venerable hermit, Walter the Moneyless. The Counts Toulouse, Fermandoise, and Blois, the careless and gallant Robert of Normandy, were before him. He saw in his mind's eye the siege of Nice ; the re-capture and re-taking of Jerusalem ; the crusade of the Emperor Courade and Lewis the Seventh. He shuddered at the assassination of the brave Marquis of Montserrat ; despised the weak Austria and the envious Philip ; and his heart swelled at the noble daring and gallant exploits of Cœur de Lion and the Soldan Saladin. And yet amidst the gaieties which courtesy sometimes compelled him to be a party to, he was dull

able to a lover of the fine arts; the Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen had a special collection of paintings at the private cabinets of Prince Liechtenstein, Schönborn, and Berg.

Audley visited the two arsenals—the imperial one; in the former the head of Kara Mustapha, the sultan of Egypt, who fell in the siege of 1683, and was slain after the capture of Belgrade by the Sultan. In the latter are to be seen the great men, the armour of crusader, Godfrey of Bouillon—the Holy Temple; of Frederick the Emperor Charles the Fifth—jacket and the hat worn by the Archduke when he was killed at Lützen; the helmet of Prince Maurice, the brother warrior of Marlborough used by the French

view: Bradley has
it. His mind pro-
fesses enthusiasm and
as though ministered
and their sentences as
city from the bound-
ed the voice of the
the Emperor. The
whole, and those
short of Democracy,
r in his mind as
other anti-existing
le of the Emperor
ent. He considers
the lesser Emperor
a weak character and
his heart swelled at
an exploit of Caesar
Julius. shall you
mention something
else to me now that

going every moment ; the drums were beating ; the men under arms ; the people were *en masse* on foot, on horseback, and in carriages, jostling each other in every direction ; four royal guards of grenadiers were mounted on the Grand Square. The *wache heraus* — “Guard turn out,” — was uttered every five minutes.

Amongst other entertainments which had been provided for the amusement of royalty, nothing could surpass the splendour of a tournament which took place at the Imperial riding-school. The sides were filled with a dense mass of well-dressed spectators. At each end, galleries had been erected, decorated with party-coloured festoons and draperies of silk ; the pillars that supported them, were covered with floating pennons, bearing gallant mottoes ; and these galleries were now filled with all the distinguished representatives of the most noble families. One was reserved for the reception of the court ;

the train who attended the imperial *cortège* on this occasion, were of the bravest and the fairest, the wisest counsellors, the highest born nobles.

The arrival of the Empress, who was to appropriate the rewards, escorted by the noble Hungarian guard in their uniforms of green and silver, with their leopard skin accoutrements, all mounted on grey chargers, was announced by a clamorous blast of war-like music, playing the national anthem, “God preserve the Emperor.” Several thousands of male voices joining in the choral chaunt; the scene was singularly imposing. A flourish of trumpets announced the arrival of those who meant to take part in the tournament. The massive gates were then thrown open, and the knights, preceded by heralds and pursuivants at arms, entered in long procession, forming up in line of double file in front of the imperial tent, the leader of each party

being in the centre of the foremost rank, their swords drawn, and their lances upright, their bright points glancing

“ Their armour as it caught the rays,
Flash’d back again the general blaze
In lines of dazzling light.”

There they remained until the “ crowned heads” had inspected the ranks.

To describe all the “ bravely mounted” and the “ richly armed” would be impossible. There was one party, however, that we must more particularly notice, headed by one who looked the “ flower of chivalry,” and who was mounted on a red roan charger, armed in a complete suit of Milan steel; his helmet was of burnished gold, and he was attended by a gallant squire, carrying his tilting spear.

“ He burn’d the gilded spurs to claim.”

Four men at arms on coal black steeds, heavily sheathed in mail and plate, bore his crest, a

lion passant, upon their shields. The joustings then began.

Every knight who wished to enter the lists approached the barrier, throwing his gauntlet of defiance over it. The herald's attendant then came forth, and registered his name or armorial bearings. Many were the "gages" showered in the lists. The contendors were then admitted at separate barriers; after paying their respects to the sovereigns and ladies, they took their respective stations, when, as the trumpets sounded, couching their lances and spurring their horses, "the faint image of war" commenced.

For some moments the dust raised by the clattering steeds darkened the air: when the tourney became visible, many knights had been shaken from their saddles; armour was shattered, and lances splintered. A truce was then sounded, the successful champions filing by and saluting the imperial party. At the head

rode the Knight of the Lion, followed by brave companions in arms.

The lists being removed, other war-like exercises commenced ; here again the perfect horsemanship of the lion-hearted knight, and the activity of his gallant roan, proved victorious. The air was now rent with the clamorous shouts of exultation. Ladies waved their embroidered scarfs ; military music was sounded, and banners and pennons floated in the wind. The knights then dismounted, removing their helmets, and, kneeling at the foot of the throne, the prizes were awarded.

Dudley, for he was the distinguished Knight of the Lion, came forward. Every eye was fixed upon him, and he on one knee made obeisance : there was a murmur of admiration at the noble appearance of this handsome and gallant youth, whose magnificent suit of armour, became his firm and graceful form : for an instant's delight at his triumph, and the natural pride

youth animated his countenance; but his joy was momentary, and it soon retired from the open light of his features to the shade of his saddened breast.

The imperial palace was crowded with crowned heads. There were two emperors, two empresses, four kings and a queen; two hereditary princes, the one imperial the other royal; two grand duchesses, and two princes. The whole of the building, we may here observe, forms a rectangled parallelogram; on one of the great sides is the palace, properly so called, and on the other, opposite to it, are the buildings for the council of state. The Amelia and Swiss palaces form the wings. The Emperor and Empress of Russia inhabited the second story of the Amelia palace. The King of Wurtemburg occupied the first. The King and Queen of Bavaria, with the princes, their sons, and the grand Duchess of Weimar, occupied the council buildings. The King of Den-

mark had that part of the Swiss palace which looks towards the bastions; and the King of Prussia, that which faces the city. The hereditary Prince of Prussia resided with the latter. The Emperor and Empress of Austria; the grand Duchess of Oldenburgh and the hereditary Prince of Austria occupied what is properly called the palace. The young Archdukes and Archduchesses were at Schönbrun.

The witty, and not less true saying, that "*Le Congrès danse, mais il n'avance pas,*" was strikingly illustrated. At a party given by Prince Metternich, the gay and courtly throng imparted life and animation to the scene. All the nobles, by the express wish of the Emperor, appeared in the costumes of their respective peasants.

The ball given by Prince Razumousky, the Russian Ambassador, was followed by a magnificent banquet, at which eight hundred guests were all conveniently seated at the tables.

The most splendid entertainment was the court-ball. It was one of unequalled brilliancy; there were foreigners of every European nation. The splendid Russian, the proud Austrian; natives of Prussia and Poland; Englishmen, Frenchmen, Danes, Swedes, Portuguese, Italians, Greeks, and Spaniards. The whole suite of long and handsome apartments were thrown open. The antechambers and corridors were lined with the noble Hungarian guard, in their richest uniforms. The saloon, in which the Empress and her ladies were seated, was a dazzling scene of magnificence; there were feathers waving, diamonds glittering, lustres gleaming, music quavering, fairs prattling. The roof supported by pillars in imitation of finely white polished Parian marble, reflected the lustres by which it was lighted; the ladies richly adorned with diamonds;—kings, nobles, and ambassadors decorated with orders, dressed in military uni-

forms, interwoven with gold, clasped with pearls ;—diamonds, plumes, stars, and orders, were all in profusion. There might be seen the grave courtier, and the stern patriot; the youthful scions of the noblesse, just launched in the ensnaring blandishments and gaieties of the world ;—the youthful *belle*, the faded beauty, the aged chaperon, emperors and empresses, kings and queens, warriors, statesmen, mingled with a galaxy of beauty. Mazurkas, polonaises, waltzing were seen to perfection; the music was unequalled. *There*, amidst *la crème*, might be seen the shrunken figure and sallow features of the Emperor of Austria; the manly form of the great Autocrat of Russia; the solemn gait of the King of Prussia, whose tall form contrasted with that of Denmark's diminutive King; the English-looking face of the King of Bavaria, the fine forms of the Duke of Saxe Coburg and his brother the Prince Leopold; the handsome

dark military figure of the Viceroy of Italy, Eugène Beauharnois; and last not least the simple manly form of Wellington. But it would be an endless task to enumerate the lions of the night. It was a vast regal menagerie, and even *one* of them, had he but made his appearance during a London season, would have been run after with that avidity with which John Bull always welcomes novelty, whether in the shape of a Don Cossack, a Hottentot Venus, an anatomie *vivante*, a Bayadere, a Swiss Giantess, or a Polish Dwarf.

The frost had now set in; the ground was covered with snow; all the wheeled carriages, even to the hackney coaches, had disappeared, and the streets were crowded with sledges. The Emperor had appointed a day for a party, at one of his palaces, some distance from the city. At two o'clock the procession, consisting of forty sledges, left the palace, preceded and followed by a band of music and an escort of cavalry.

Nothing could be more animated than the appearances of the *traineaux*, their brilliant colours, their ornaments of gold and silver, lined throughout with the richest velvets and most expensive furs. The horses were caparisoned in embroidered cloth of gold, with plumes upon their heads and necks; their manes and tails plaited with ribands; and bearing a mass of silver or gilded bells across their shoulders. The picturesque costumes of the servants in their cloaks of sable, of the chasseurs and equerries in the uniforms and liveries of their respective masters, were strikingly effective. The return of the procession, by torch-light, had a most imposing effect.

A dulness was spread over Vienna by the death of the Prince of Aremberg. A very spirited horse which he was riding in St. Joseph's Plat, knocked down a woman. The Prince alighted to inquire into the situation of the woman, who had fortunately received no se-

rious injury. The young Prince again mounted his horse, which shortly reared and threw his rider; he was conveyed, in a lifeless state, to the palace of Prince Schwartzenberg. A fatality seems to have attended the Prince's family. His father received, when shooting, a gun-shot in his eye, by which he was deprived of his sight; his mother died on the guillotine; his brother was banished in consequence of a duel in which he had the misfortune to kill his adversary; and, finally, his sister perished in the fire which broke out in the house of Prince Schwartzenberg, at Paris. This, indeed, was a doomed house!

But the object of the greatest interest to Dudley, and one for whom he felt the deepest commiseration, was that inestimable mourner, the dethroned Empress of the world, the imperial daughter, the imperial bride, the imperial victim, sacrificed to pride; whose lot it was, midst the festivities, the rejoicings, with

which her father's court re-echoed, to maintain the dignity of misfortune. "Proud Austria's mournful flower," the Empress Marie Louise, with her guiltless son, to whom, but a few months before, the eyes of the world had been directed,—now lived in seclusion at Schönbrunn, a phantom of departed glory and greatness. Ravensworth, tempted by the interest of the object, so far transgressed the limits of propriety as to request an introduction to the infant King of Rome, then styled the Prince of Parma,

"the boy,
The young Astyanax of modern Troy."

His request was acceded to. He was conducted to the garden, where, dressed in the uniform of an hussar, with a profusion of light curly hair falling upon his neck, and with an engaging though bashful appearance, the son of *L'homme du siècle* was occupied in the

childish pursuit of some new invented game. Some dozen Frenchmen, still wearing the liveries of the fallen Emperor, and a few faithful friends, were all that remained of the court of the Empress.

Dudley reflected on the rapid and eventful changes that a few short years had worked in her destiny. Nine years had only elapsed since the French army had entered Vienna in triumph, headed by him who had overrun Europe from the Tagus to the Kremlin—nay, within five, the city had again been taken possession of by Napoleon's all-conquering arms. It was here, too, that the prediction was realised, that his life would be exposed to the chances to which despots are ever liable by the dagger of some political or religious enthusiast. In the very palace of Schönbrun he had established his head-quarters, and dictated the terms of peace to the imperial house of Austria. He reflected on the bitter pang the daughter of

that house must feel at the *fêtes* given in honour of the downfal of the father of her son, of him from whom her own unexampled greatness had sprung; he *reflected* on the abject misery, the bitter hopelessness, the now-deserted Marie Louise—

“The theme of pity, and the wreck of power,”—

must have experienced, when in a gallery in the same palace, where five years previously, on a sick bed, she had obtained the sympathy of Napoleon in diverting the bombardment from the quarter in which she resided, and where four years ago she had witnessed the august ceremony of her espousals, she had now concealed herself to behold the allied sovereigns, those sovereigns who had deposed her husband, and called down public vengeance upon his head. Here subsequently the four allied sovereigns of Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, concluded a treaty binding themselves to main-

tain the treaty of Paris, to keep each, one hundred and fifty thousand men in the field, and not to lay down their arms till Bonaparte should be deprived of the power of exciting disturbances, thus placing him without the pale of civil and social relations, as an enemy and destroyer of the tranquillity of the world.

The circumstances that led to this treaty are well known. The news reached Vienna that on the 24th of February Bonaparte had sailed from Porto Ferrajo in one of his own brigs, the *Inconstant*, followed by six smaller vessels. A few Frenchmen, several Corsicans, Elbese, and Poles, to the amount of one thousand, accompanied him. It was stated, that after encountering two great risks, first in meeting a royal French frigate, which hailed the *Inconstant*, and secondly in the pursuit of the British sloop of war, the *Partridge*, which had followed with the determination to capture or sink the flotilla, he had landed at Cannes, in the gulph of

St. Juan in Provence, between Frejus and Antibes, and on the next day had proceeded on his route, escorted only by a few Polish lancers. He had passed the town of Grasse, without entering it, and in the two following days had proceeded by Sisteron and Gap across the mountains to Grenoble, where the 7th regiment, with their colonel, Labedoyère, had joined his ranks, and on the 8th of March the whole garrison had opened the gates to him. He then advanced with his eagle to Lyons, which he entered at the head of six hundred horse, when he was joined by the troops in garrison; thence to Maçon and Chalons; at Laons de Saulnier, "the bravest of the brave," Ney, who had declared that he would bring Bonaparte to Paris, like a wild beast in a cage, recognized his superiority, joined him, and again sunk i his satellite. In a few days his advanced gu was at Auxerre, forty leagues from Paris; before the end of the month he had reach

Fontainebleau, near which, at Melun, one hundred thousand men were posted.

But, to our history. It was on the morning of the 7th of March, that a numerous party of sportsmen assembled near Eisenstadt, the magnificent residence of Prince Esterhazy, to enjoy a diversion altogether novel in Hungary, a stag-hunt *à l'Anglaise*; the pack English, (Lord Stewart's, now the Marquis of Londonderry's fox hounds;) the horses English, huntsmen and whippers-in English, all in English costume. What a contrast is this neat turn-out to the show, tinsel, and trapping, the pomp and circumstance of a foreign *chasse* that had previously taken place. The mighty Nimrod, the Picqueur, was richly caparisoned in gold-laced cocked hat, a powdered peruke, long yellow coat with crimson facings and gilt buttons, bearing on them impressions of all the different animals of the chase. His equipments of the field were huge jack-

boots, long chain-spurs, French-horn, and *couteau de chasse*. His thick stumpy horse was fat as a prize ox, with red velvet housings, holsters at his saddle bow, gold embossed bridle and crupper. The *valets des chiens* were in laced cocked-hats, scarlet jackets and "shorts," white stockings and pumps; a few cumbering *gens d'armes* hung at your elbow, ordering you to the right or left.

But, to return to our chase. At eleven o'clock a noble stag was turned out, and went away in gallant style. When viewed at the distance of about two miles, the hounds were laid on, and after a little time challenged in good form. The crash was awful—

"A cry more tuneable
Never, was hallooed to, or cheered with horn."

Forward, forward! resounds through the plain. Away they went at an English pace, over a fine galloping country, through the extensive plain of Margarethen, towards the lake

of Sulty ; here the stag took the water, the hounds followed ! Their noble master, Prince Esterhazy, and a few chosen sportsmen dashing in with them. The scene was now most animating,—a stag swimming a lake, more than a mile from one shore to the other, a gallant pack following, encouraged by the daring riders ; happily they all came safely to shore, and, after a few moments' pause, the hounds challenged, and ran in a direct line for nearly two miles ; here the deer was headed, and bent his course back towards the lake, which he made a desperate effort to gain, but in vain, for before he could reach the water's edge, the gallant pack had pulled down their game. Here the chosen few were joined by their long-lost companions, who were not amphibious enough to prefer swimming a lake to galloping on dry land. In one respect they had been compensated for their loss of sport ; they were the first to hear of the escape of one, who for years had “ kept the

world at bay ;” His country’s Cæsar, Europe’s
Hannibal—

“ Whose game was empires, and whose stakes were thrones,
Whose table earth,— whose dice were human bones.”

A courier had that morning reached the Duke of Wellington with despatches from Lord Burghersh, giving an account that Bonaparte had quitted the island of Elba.

Dudley immediately left Vienna, proceeded to Dover, where he found the regiment to which he had been just appointed lieutenant, preparing to embark for Ostend.

CHAPTER XI.

WATERLOO.

*And Antennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave,—alas !
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.*

BYRON.

Yes—Agincourt may be forgot,
And Cressy be an unknown spot,
And Blenheim's name be new;
But still in story and in song,
For many an age remembered long,
Shall live the towers of Hougoumont
And field of Waterloo.

WALTER SCOTT.

THE embarkation commenced as soon as the transports were ready, and the first fair wind wafted them from their native shore; few can witness their father-land fade away from their view without experiencing those painful and melancholy feelings which the remembrance of home and former years so painfully excites.

"The sails were fill'd, and fair the light winds blew,
As glad to waft him from his native home;
And fast the white rocks faded from his view,
And soon were lost in circumambient foam :
And then, it may be, of his wish to roam,
Repented he, but in his bosom slept
The silent thought, nor from his lips did come
One word of wail, whilst others sat and wept
And to the reckless gales unmanly moaning kept."

Dudley's departure was embittered by the reflection that he had not had time to revisit the scene of his youth and love, to purify in Constance's thoughts his character, and to restore himself to her affections. His military enthusiasm was now awakened; dreams of ambition illumined his slumbers, hopes of dis-

tinction and honour brightened his waking thoughts. We pass over the life of Dudley in Brussels; it was one of excitement and anxiety.

On the morning of the 16th June, the division to which Ravensworth belonged was drawn up at the Park at Brussels. Nothing could exceed the martial bearing of the men, the fluttering of the tartans, the bagpipes playing the Highland pibrock. They marched from the Place Royale, through the forest of Soignies, and at half-past two reached Quatre-Bras. We pass over the event of that and the following day. On the night of the 17th they took up their ground on the field of Waterloo.

" Our bugles sang truce, for the night-cloud had lowered
And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky ;
And thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered,
The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die."

But sleep was denied to Dudley, who, cold, comfortless, and disheartened, was rendered fur-

ther wretched at the loss of Harry Percival, killed at Quatre-Bras.

Dudley was now exposed in an open bivouac to the inclemencies of the weather, to the heavy bursts of rain, the vivid flashes of lightning, the loud claps of thunder, the furious gusts of wind. Heavily and slowly did the night wear through. The dawn of the 18th was attended with the same tempestuous weather; at daylight, wet and unrefreshed, the troops arose from their cheerless bivouac, to make preparations for the coming fight. The armies were visible to each other.

The battle of Waterloo has been so often and so ably described, that it is needless to enter into it, further than to say, Dudley bore his share of the glory of that well-contested day; posted with his regiment on the left, near Ter la Haye, he saw

“ In seas of gore expire
Redoubted Picton’s soul of fire.”

—he saw the death of him who led on the storious assault of Ciudad Rodrigo ; whose wing hand planted the British standard on the castle of Badajos ; whose battalions led the centre of that formidable line at Vittoria, before which the veteran troops of France fled in terror and dismay.

Dudley's regiment maintained a conspicuous part in that embattled line, where the British Guards repulsed and put to flight the guards of France, the veteran followers of the imperial warrior.

Just previous to that last attack, which decided the fate of the day, whilst gloriously leading his company to a charge with bayonets, Dudley received a wound from a musket-ball, through the shoulder ; he fell, and in this helpless state lay a considerable time on the ground, every moment in danger of being impaled upon by the enemy's straggling cavalry, and suffering great agony, accompa-

nied by the most violent thirst. A French officer severely wounded crept towards him, and whe to all appearance at the last gasp, present a flask of spirit to him. This revived Dudley but almost produced a fatal result, for, at the moment, a lancer plunged his lance into his arm, exclaiming, "*Ah! le coquin n'est pas mort:*" recovering his lance, he was about renew his attack, when a private soldier of Dudley's company, who had been disabled by a wound in his knee, threw himself before him and averted the blow. He fell a victim to his fatal intrepidity, and this is not the only instance of the devoted bearing of the British soldier in sacrificing his life to avert death from his officer.

The minutes dragged heavily away, Dudley lay stretched on the ground, surrounded by the dead and dying. It is strange with what power the thought of "home" comes upon us when we are suffering mental or bod-

ins ; Dudley felt this acutely, he thought of instance ; never was her image absent from thoughts.

The firing now seemed to spread itself over the whole surface of the plain. Napoleon lined his forces, made a desperate effort with the cavalry and infantry, supported by the of artillery, to force the left centre ; his st and bravest troops fell by sections around n : the result is well known ; he was utterly beaten, his troops retired in great confusion, d "Le Vainqueur du Vainqueur de la terre" t the name for ever.

For many hours Dudley lay thus extended, exhausted with the loss of blood, when a party of his regiment came up. He was placed, lying with agony, in a hospital waggon, and sent to the rear. Morning dawned upon the wretched sufferer ; he found himself in the spital at Brussels. All around was calm, except when the stillness was broken by the

exclamation of despair, or the death shriek of some poor wretch in mortal agony. There, amidst the deep groans of the sufferers, and fearless of

“All maladies,
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torturing qualms,
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,”

were to be seen Englishwomen, aye, even of “coroneted brows,” tending the wounded, alleviating their distresses, administering to their comforts, instilling the healing balm of religion into the dying.

The scene at Brussels surpassed all that imagination could conjure up. Upwards of 40,000 wounded, French, Belgians, Prussians, and English were brought into the town. The wounded were laid indiscriminately on straw throughout the city. Destitute of surgical assistance, the Belgian ladies and females were employed in their humane and indefatigable

exertions, bandaging their wounds, serving out nourishment, soothing and alleviating the pangs of the dying sufferers. Beautiful as woman is in all the charities of life, never does she appear so pre-eminently beautiful as in the chamber of death, administering to the wants of the sufferers. And who were these

"Ministering angels? when pain and anguish wring the brow."

I would fain ennable my pages with their names, but that I know they were those who

" did good by stealth,
And would blush to find it fame."

There was one, however, that it is incumbent upon me to mention—Mary Cressingham, who with her father had, from motives of economy, retired to Brussels a month previous to the battle. Unobserved by the world, she stole into the hospital to pour the waters of consolation into the dejected heart. She felt

sorely the death of Harry Percival, though her heart acknowledged with silent pride that he died the death of the brave, the patriotic, and the good.

The injury that Dudley had received was less severe than he had at first imagined; his wounds gradually healed, and he was at length pronounced to be in a state in which he might without danger join the army. After traversing the road, replete with marks of recent ravages and hostile devastation, Dudley reached Paris, in time to see the standard of England and her allies floating triumphantly over the gates of that proud city.

Ravensworth encountered an adventure which, if properly embellished, might make a tolerably effective incident for a modern farce. He had received a staff appointment, and it fell to his lot to be the bearer of despatches to the king of Holland at the Hague, containing the treaty of Paris. "He was

goodly stripling then," and at the time of which we write, the costume of staff officers was not very strictly attended to—not quite "according to Dundas." In a fancy hussar dress, with a pair of mustachios highly curled and ungualted, and in a light britshka and fur, which the badness of the road had made necessary, Ravensworth left Paris. No adventure occurred on the road, except the usual vexatious delays at the fortified towns, the bribery of douanniers, the grumbling of postilions, the importunities of beggars, and all the usual *agrémens* of continental travelling until he reached the gates of the Hague. The day had been raw, cold, and wet; the mists had risen from the comfortless fields and dykes; and at a little before ten o'clock, Ravensworth, muffled up in his military cloak, stopped at the outer barrier or guard-house. "The bearer of despatches for His Majesty the King of Holland," said Dudley in tolerable good French. The

officer saluted, the sentry carried arms. A orderly entered the guard-room hastily; and a moment a staff officer, one of his Majesty's aides-de-camp, was on horseback by the side of the carriage.

"Mon Général (General! brevet rank, with a vengeance, thought Ravensworth) Sa Majesté le Roi mon maître, m'ordonne de vous informer qu'à votre arrivée en ville il vous recevra à quelle heure que ce soit." Ravensworth bowed. "Postillon, à l'hôtel de l'Europe. Tout est déjà préparé pour vous recevoir, Général."

Ravensworth had no time for explanation or thanks, but was rapidly whirled towards the excellent hotel provided for him. At the entrance two sentries were posted; they received him with military honours. The smiling landlord, with his happy-looking comely face, his better half in the neatest-looking of all gowns and caps,—were at

door, attended by a regiment of officious, thless waiters, simpering chambermaids, quious *cuisiniers* and *concierges* to greet on his arrival

Ravensworth descended from the carriage at the cheers of a party assembled in street. In the entrance hall an assembly of ladies waved their handkerchiefs, sented bouquets to the astonished aide-amp, crying "Vive le Roi! Vive le Prince d'Orange! Orange Boven!" Ravensworth, knowing the admiration the Dutch for the gallant conduct of their Prince Waterloo, attributed this *furore* to the sense of a brother in arms; and "bearing his blushing honours thick upon him," modestly acknowledged the flattering compliments, and entered the room appointed for —The landlord appeared, and, after making sundry obeisances, expressed a hope that my thing was to the General's satisfaction;

then obsequiously adding, “ Si monsieur le Général voulait seulement se montrer au peuple, cette condescendance de sa part serait reçue avec la plus vive reconnaissance par son humble et obéissant serviteur.” When Ravensworth appeared at the window, shouts and exclamations rent the air, and nothing could exceed the enthusiasm of the people.

Le Colonel Von R—— was now announced, and he informed Ravensworth that his royal master was ready to receive him. Ravensworth requested a quarter of an hour to make his toilet, which was immediately granted. Just as he had finished his refreshing task, a gentle knocking was heard at the door. “ Entrez.” —The landlord made his appearance, with a passport in his hand, which, on presenting to Ravensworth, he immediately recognised as his own, and which he had left at the gate when he had been received with so much honour.

"Mille pardons, Général, est-ce la votre passeport?"

"Assurément."

The landlord left the room. Dudley imagined he saw some slight alteration in his manner. On re-entering his former sitting-room, the waiter, after indulging in a very suspicious-looking stare, begged his pardon, and requested he would follow him to another apartment, as that one was engaged.

Ravensworth's surprise and confusion increased; he evidently saw an ebbing of the previous high tide of respect. Left to himself, he paced the room—the sound of relieving the sentries attracted his attention; he threw open the window, and saw them marched off without a fresh deposit. He also fancied he heard some expressions which sounded to his ears, as rather coming from the north side of favour.

At length, after some little delay, the mystery

was dissolved by the arrival of the royal ~~ad-~~
~~de-camp~~, who most good-humouredly explained
that His Majesty had for some days been
anxiously expecting the arrival of a distin-
guished Russian officer from the city of the
Czar, with the contract of marriage between
the sister of the Emperor and the Prince of
Orange: that the greatest anxiety had been
manifested throughout the country at so im-
portant and long-wished for an event, as the
union of the heir to the throne of Holland
with a sister of the house of Russia. He
explained that the mistake had occurred by
the over zeal of the captain of the guard and
himself, in not having ascertained the nature of
the despatches or the name of their bearer.
The passport had first thrown a light upon
the subject. It now only remained for him to
assure Le Capitaine Ravensworth that His
Majesty would receive him on the following
morning at 11 o'clock, and that he felt assur-

ed, as an English officer of distinction, he would receive every mark of courtesy and attention from those who had so lately fought, side by side, on the ensanguined field of Waterloo.

Dudley made a suitable speech in reply, and retired to his room, where fatigue and excitement soon gave him sleep.

On the following day he presented himself at the palace, and was most graciously received. The king regretted the inconvenience Ravensworth had been put to, though, to use his flattering phraseology, "He could not be very much surprised at the mistake that had occurred, for that Captain Ravensworth's conduct at Waterloo had been worthy of a General Officer's."

After joining the royal party at dinner, Ravensworth took his departure from the Hague, and returned to Paris, where his wound broke out afresh, and being advised to try a

sea voyage, he hastened to England, and finding a friend who was about to proceed to Quebec, he obtained a birth aboard, and went out in shattered health, and no less shattered spirits “o'er the dark blue waters of the Atlantic.”

CHAPTER XII.

AMERICA.

A wet sheet and a flowing sea
A wind that follows fast
And fills the white and rustling sail,
And bends the gallant mast ;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys !
While, like the Eagle free—
Away the good ship flies and leaves
Old England on the lee !

O for a soft and gentle wind !
I heard a fair one cry ;
But give to me the snoring breeze—
And white waves heaving high ;
And white waves heaving high, my boys !
The good ship light and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we !

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

How divine,
The liberty, for frail, for mortal man
To roam at large among unpeopled glens,
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps!

WORDSWORTH.

THERE is nothing like active employment ~~for~~ diverting sorrow from its prey. The hurry ~~of~~ embarkation roused Dudley; his mind, which had dwelt with horror on the idea of so long a separation, was now relieved in some degree by the consolatory thought that Constance would retain the divine character of her name “through good report and evil report.” “If she loves me, absence and time are friends not foes.” With what rapture did he cherish the now withered flower which Constance had given him at their last interview, and with this simple gift what a chain of associations was linked! He had received much consolation from his accidental meeting with Miss Cressingham at Brussels, and through her he had addressed a line to Constance, dwelling at

eater length than might be palatable to our
iders, upon "Amore e Costanza."

Early in June they sailed from Portsmouth,
d at the end of about five weeks they dis-
ned Cape Race, the south-easternmost point
the islands of Newfoundland. On the third
y following they made Cape Ray, the south-
westernmost point of the same island, and steer-
for the Bay of St. Lawrence. Here they had,
ording to the log, "a succession of light
rs" for some days, with barely sufficient wind
r the vessel to feel her helm; all listlessly and
ily lounging, and whistling in vain for a wind.
length a breeze sprang up with such force,
t the "Daring" could not set a stitch of
vass save her storm staysail, and fore
ail closely reefed. Thus she was running
idly at twelve knots an hour.

Captain Oakleigh was, to use homely phrase,
fine a fellow as ever broke biscuit, and
t rigid in the discharge of his duty; he

possessed a sound and noble heart, a high independent spirit, a firm and manly character, and, notwithstanding the strictness of his discipline, was most universally popular; he had commanded a crack ship in the war, which was a pattern for order and regularity, and to that rigid discipline the steadiness of the British sailor is owing. Oakleigh was beloved by his crew: they saw in him the skilful seaman, the daring and intrepid leader; they felt an enthusiastic devotion for their captain; they boasted that, through the world, there was no such handsome craft as the Daring.

They sailed up the spacious and majestic St. Lawrence, the shores of which are studded with farm-houses, which, contrasted with the cultivated lands, and the surrounding scenery of islands, and mountains covered with immense forests, form a succession of beautiful landscapes. Passing the Isle of Anticosti, they anchored off Cape Diamond. Quebec stands

on the extremity of the Cape, and has a very romantic appearance. An immense projecting rock, with an impregnable citadel, the bright steeples of the cathedrals and churches, the houses, nunneries, and warehouses rising gradually one above another in the form of an amphitheatre, and which being covered with tin (so put on that it never rusts) to prevent conflagration, have the appearance of being covered with silver, when the rays of the sun lie on the buildings.—The crowd of shipping is beneath.—On the left stands Point Levi, thickly covered with houses, with here and there an Indian wigwam.—On the right is the fruitful island of Orleans, with its neat dwellings, clothed with lofty trees.—Beyond, the falls of Montmorenci, burst through a majestic chasm over a ledge 220 feet high, seen in an opening upon the elevated shores of Beauport,—these, and the mountains in the distance, form a most impressive and grand object.

During the few days Dudley remained at Quebec, he visited the plains of Abraham, where the gallant Wolfe so dearly purchased his renown,—and the falls of Montmorenci and La Chaudiere. Since the period of which we write, a monument commemorating the glorious deeds of Wolfe and Montcalm has been raised in the citadel. On the plains of Abraham, a simple column has also been erected on the spot where Wolfe fell, with the simple yet appropriate epitaph :

“ HERE DIED WOLFE VICTORIOUS.”

From Quebec, Dudley proceeded to Montreal, from thence to Kingston in the bâteaux. As we are not writing a tour, we shall therefore only briefly notice his voyage and journey, which, owing to the strength of the currents, was very tedious, occasionally compelling the party to walk a pipe or two; for so devoted is a French Canadian to the Nicotian weed, that, by the burning of his tobacco he “ calculates ”

the distance, and gravely tells you such a place is two pipes off; *id est*, according to the "weed estimate," one mile and a half.

Generally speaking, the whole river running from the Gulph of St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario, is simply called the St. Lawrence, though it receives a large branch of the Ottawa and Iroquois rivers. Nothing could be more picturesque than the bivouac at night; the bâteaux are drawn up, the tents pitched, and the crews divide themselves into gipsy groups.

Crossing the Ottawa river, the scene is splendid: each river rushes down over immense rocks, with an impetuosity which, apparently, nothing can resist, and when a raft of timber is shooting down, the danger to any object it meets is fearful. From Le saut de Trou to the Coteau des Cèdres, the rapids are so strong, that the parties quitting the bâteaux proceed on foot. Nothing can exceed the wild appear-

ance of the scenery ; the loud roaring of the waters, the solemn gloom of the trackless forests.

Passing through a canal near the rapids du Coteau du Lac St. François, where the stream runs fourteen miles an hour, they entered Lake St. François, encamped for the night at Isle aux Raisins, so called from the number of wild vines growing thereon. Near this spot are many islands, still in possession of the Indians. From St. Regis to the mouth of the Oswegatchee river, the rapids are numberless. On the sixth morning they entered the Lake of a Thousand Islands, twenty-five miles in length, and six in breadth; many of the islands are scarcely larger than a bâateau — the largest is but from eleven to fifteen acres — all are beautifully covered with wood, forming the hunting encampments of the Indian. Kingston is a place of considerable trade, and has a commodious harbour and dock-yard.

Crossing Lake Ontario, they reached Niagara. Anxious to arrive at "the falls," Dudley lost no time in proceeding there: his expectations were raised to the highest pitch. He must indeed be a cold observer, who can see this wonder of the creation without sensations more than ordinarily solemn and intense. The stupendous water exceeds all that the most extravagant imagination can seize, and impresses on the mind, at once, the illimitable vastness of the Creator, who hath bidden such a miracle shroud itself in the majesty of mighty waters. Yet, we will not attempt to describe them, but rather, after the fashion of modern play-bills and notices of new works, refer to the "opinions of the press" upon them:—

"When we were within about three miles of the falls, we heard distinctly, though far off, the voice of the mighty cataract. Looking over the woods which appeared to overhang the course of the river, we beheld one

silver cloud, rising slowly into the sky, the everlasting incense of the waters."

"Down I sprang along the narrow footpath, divided only by a thicket from the tumultuous rapids. I saw through the boughs the white glimmer of that sea of foam. 'Go on, go on, don't stop!' shouted,—and in another minute the thicket was passed. I stood upon the table rock;—seized me by the arm, and without speaking a word dragged me to the edge of the rapids, to the brink of the abyss. I saw Niagara! O God! who can describe that sight?' This is the vivid language of Fanny Kemble;—for I must call her by her fame-name."

From Niagara, Dudley proceeded to the North West Company's station at Winnipeg. Making his way up the mazy and wandering rivers that interlace the vast forests, coasting the most remote lakes,—here the canoes were navigated by Indians;—he traversed Lake Erie,

Lake Huron, passing through the straits of St. Mary, and crossing the portage into Lake Superior. Coasting along the shores of Lake Superior they came to the grand portage; from hence by a chain of small lakes and rivers they passed Rain Lake, the Lake of the Woods, to Winnipeg. Returning nearly the same route to Fort Erie, they crossed to Buffalo creek, where they provided themselves with Indians as guides, and proceeded on foot to the Genesee river. Here the weather was cold and severe, owing to the vapour from the waters. Scarcely an animated being was to be seen; now and then a wigwam appeared, out of which a wild Indian, looking himself like an antique ruin of the forest, wildly gazed. And occasionally an eagle, like the king of the desert, looked down, glaring at the temerity of a stranger penetrating his empire.

Proceeding further into the country the sun again resumed its empire. The atmosphere was

pure; the heavens were unclouded; the influence of the great lakes had ceased; the wild meadows were verdant, the gigantic trees in rich foliage.

It is hardly possible to describe the rapture Dudley felt in traversing the forests, the eternal solitudes where still dwell the Indians, subject to privations, but happy in their liberty; the torrents, the cataracts, the great lakes, like seas, were life to him. He experienced all the charms of those vital impressions, of which nature is the only source. The rivers, the mountains, the valleys of the ancient world, are all remembered by their associations. What would the river Jordan be? a yellow current, deeply sunk below its banks, its sluggish stream rolling slowly on, scarcely distinguishable from the sands on its shores; or Sion? an almost imperceptible mound, if they did not present to our view the scene of the miracles of our religion, and impress us with the sanctity of their

renowned antiquity. Who would remark the little river that runs near Sparta, if it was not called the Eurotas? or who pause at the banks of the Illyssus, if Plato had not there informed the world with wisdom. The Aufidus, Tiber, and Po, are celebrated in the songs of Horace, Virgil, and Ovid. Not so immortalised as yet are the desert rivers of the New World; they have no names, they recal no event. You admire the majesty of their waters, the wild aspect of their courses; such as you see them, such have they been always, without any witnesses but the silent forest that covers their banks, and the haunting Indians: their beauty, their grandeur, are without the charms of associations; they are “themselves, alone!”

But to return,—Dudley reached Philadelphia, saw the beautiful banks of the Schuylkil, and after an agreeable journey arrived at New York. Delighted with his reception there, he regarded the men to the full stretch of his

ability, and admired the invariable prettiness of the women. He enjoyed the amusements of the place ; the ground was covered with snow and Ravensworth was delighted with the " grand times " of winter, so ably described by Sam Slick in his " Sayings and Doings," of the everlasting fine country to which " you can say ditto to nowhere."

On entering the New World, Dudley resolved to leave behind him all paltry prejudices and national antipathies. He had none of the " Hauteur excessive, froideur, taciturnité, mécontentement de tout ce qu'on fasse pour satisfaire," that is so often and justly a subject of complaint against his countrymen, and he therefore everywhere received with kindness and hospitality. He was met on every side with a cordial desire to be on terms of cordiality and friendship. He saw in the mass of Americans liberal and inquiring minds; men possessing that independence of spirit w

their birthright. If occasionally he saw an exception, he was not harsh enough to draw general conclusions from isolated premises; or to indulge in national anathemas for individual irregularities. Meddling and malignant spirits had not at that period wielded their mischievous pens, and propagated slanders, which, trifling in themselves, yet tend to alienate countries. How well does a modern talented writer speak on this subject: "There is a sacred bond between us, of blood and of language, which no circumstance can break. Our literature must always be theirs; and though their laws are no longer the same as ours, we have the same Bible, and we address our common Father in the same prayer. Nations are too apt to admit that they have natural enemies. Why should they be less willing to believe that they have natural friends?"

From these pursuits and new connections Dudley was aroused by a letter from his

father, informing him of his eldest brother's death : he himself, too, had been lately seized with a dangerous illness. It urged him to return. The thought that his father had been nearly taken from him, that he might never again listen to his prudent and affectionate advice, determined him immediately to return, and it was soon in the words of Hamlet, “**For England, ho !**”

CHAPTER XIII.

DUDLEY'S RETURN TO ENGLAND.

The joys of meeting pay the pangs of absence :
Else who could bear it ?
When thy lov'd sight shall bless my eyes again,
Then will I own I ought not to complain,
Since that sweet hour is worth whole years of pain.
Rowe's Tamerlane.

Now is the hour that wakens fond desire
In men at sea, and melts their thoughtful hearts.

Carey's Dante.

But when
The tidings came that she whom he had wooed
Was wedded to another, and his heart
Was forced to rend away its only hope ;
Then, pity could have scarcely found on earth
An object worthier of regard than he,
In the transition of that bitter hour.

Wordsworth.

Byron says—

Pass we the long, unvarying course, the track
Oft trod, that never leaves a trace behind ;
Pass we the calm, the gale, the change, the tack,
And each well-known caprice of wave and wind ;
Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find,
Coop'd in their winged sea-girt citadel ;
The foul, the fair, the contrary, the kind,
As breezes rise and fall and billows swell,
Till on some jocund morn—lo, land ! and all is well.

Pass we, therefore, the Atlantic, and all its world of waves. It is impossible to describe the thrill of joy Dudley felt at once more greeting the white cliffs of Albion. Time and absence had effected no chill in the ardour of his feelings. The vessel ran by the Needles, and anchored at Spithead. His feeling was an alternation of rapture and misery ; at one moment he was exulting in the anticipation of clasping Constance within his arms—and the next recalling to his mind the often repeated disappointments he had been subjected to.

With a feverish anxiety to return home,

again to see her who had never or rarely been absent from his thoughts, whose image had pursued him in every change of situation, he immediately landed. Letters awaited him, informing him of his father's convalescence, and he lost no time in ordering horses, and was speedily on his road to London. What rapturous sensations filled his heart ! Every object breathed of delight — the fields, the stately woods, the towering hills, the fertile vales, the winding streams, and spacious lawns, enriched by the cloudless splendour of the setting sun, constituted a most lovely prospect. It was delightful to Dudley, to feel

"All the comforts of his English home."

But his pleasing reflections were interrupted by an accident which detained him for some time on his road ; and it was ten o'clock at night before he drove up to the door of the King's Arms at Godalming. On re-ordering

horses he was informed that a county ball was to take place that night at Guildford, and that every horse had been bespoken. The courteous landlord of one of England's very best *hotelleries* suggested that the Petersfield horses could go on to Guildford; and Dudley, understanding that General and Mrs. Dunbar, who were intimate friends of the Grahams and residents in the neighbourhood, were to attend the ball, he—with a view of hearing tidings of Constance—immediately alighted, hurried to his room, made a most finished toilet (for in those days neither black neckcloths nor loose trowsers had profaned the gracious precincts of the ball-room), and, throwing himself into the chaise, found himself, after half an hour's rattling in the yellow precarious dice-box on wheels, at the door of the county-hall, Guildford. Summoning courage, he entered the ball-room, and looked anxiously around, in the hope of discovering the party from Avesford. His

handsome and interesting appearance (for he was still pallid from the effect of his wound), attracted all attention. A lisping young creature, who introduced himself to Dudley as "Th'cornet Mounthjoy, of the —— Huthsars," told him a large bridal party was expected from Avesford, and that the bride was "th' surpassingly beautiful."

Ravensworth paid but little attention to this Exquisite. Shortly after the encounter with "Mounthjoy," the Dunbars entered the room surrounded by a large party. On the arm of a short, round-faced good-natured looking man, (whom Dudley immediately recognised to be Lord Atherley,) he beheld Constance Graham in bridal array. To describe his feelings, the pen that writes this marriage history utterly fails. Absence, with its desolating influence, had done its worst; he had lost her—she was "the bride of another!" Events of the last two years flashed before him. Constance false!

all was "like a phantasma, or a hideous dream." A faintness came over him, he would have given worlds if the earth could have swallowed him up. His name had been buzzed about the room. The Dunbars approached and welcomed him most affectionately.

"Well, here you are at last, and looking better than we could have expected!" exclaimed the General, grasping Dudley's extended hand. Constance, paler and colder than marble, shrank back; while Mrs. Dunbar, in a good-humoured, off-hand manner, said,

"Mr. Ravensworth, you have surely not forgotten your old friend Constance Graham; allow me to introduce you to Lord and Lady Atherley."

At this, Lord Atherley held out a thick red specimen of the genus "hand;" and seizing, and heartily shaking Dudley's aristocratic variation of the species, said,

"Happy to renew my acquaintance with
any old friend of Lady Atherley's."

Dudley could not reply, the words died away upon his lips. Mrs. Dunbar now approached Dudley, and, taking him to a seat, urged him to return home with their party to Avesford Priory; the country air she was sure would quite re-establish his health;—in short, she would take no refusal; and it was finally arranged that Dudley was to return, after the ball, with Lord Atherley, he having a place to spare in his carriage. Never did time pass so tediously to two beings, as the two next hours did to Dudley and Constance; their meeting had been so sudden, so afflicting, that neither had recovered self-possession.

Previously to the carriages being ordered, Lord Atherley suggested that a little tea would be no bad thing. "Always take care of the inward man, is my motto."

"Mr. Ravensworth," said Mrs. Dunbar, "pray take Lady Atherley; brides have always precedence." There was no help for it.

Dudley, thus appealed to, must come forward: he offered his arm, she took it, they were once more together;—her arm trembled, his heart beat with an indefinable emotion, They walked in utter silence; but that silence was the eloquence—the pathetic eloquence of broken hearts. They entered the tea room, where as usual there was much eating, drinking, and flirting; where cold weak tea, hot orgeat, sour lemonade, tepid negus, and melting bread and butter, were distributed to the hungry and thirsty company.

At length the worn-out band was comforted with the sight of numbers departing,—there was a hope that the ball would soon be over. Then came the shawling and cloaking,—the half throttling with worsted comforters,—at

last, "Lord Atherley's carriage stops the way!" was announced, and Dudley found himself by the side of her, who for years had been

————— " His life,—
The ocean to the river of his thoughts."

Her inquiries about his health were made in faltering tones. Lord Atherley, in his usual *bonhomie* manner, said " Your old friend, Constance, must be your nurse; she will give you a drive in her pony phaeton; you must ride her own favourite pet, Azalia." Little did Lord Atherley know that Azalia had once been the property of Dudley,—that he himself had trained her for Constance,—and had named her after a flower, her first gift, the withering remains of which he still preserved with superstitious reverence. On this very flower many a solitary tear had been dropped, and many a painful sigh had been breathed in the course of his absence.

On reaching the Priory, Constance gave Dudley her hand,—which he gently held between his, and with a sigh that, soft as it was, was not lost upon her,—wished her “good night!” What mockery in the words, when left to ponder on all that had occurred. They separated ;—with the full weight of discomposed thoughts, which the events of the day had produced, Constance retired to her chamber. She speedily dismissed her *femme de chambre*, and threw herself into an arm chair. Though wearied both in body and mind, she felt but little inclined to rest. Her imagination became bewildered ; she strove to drive from her heart feelings which she neither dared to embody in words nor even to dwell upon. She knew not till that moment how “not wisely, but too well,” she had loved. The still small voice of conscience whispered her husband’s name; this thought restored Constance to her better feelings. She resolved

to drive Dudley from her mind, and to attach herself more than ever to Lord Atherley.

Dudley turned the events of the day indistinctly but rapidly over in his mind. He thought all of Constance. He painfully saw, and felt the difference of her manner; her words were kind, but their tone was altered. Alas! the ear too quickly notes if the voice be not as tender as in the trusting days. The alteration in a beloved but cherished object is too, too instantly discernible. Overtired and excited, he crept slowly to his room; throwing himself upon his bed, it was yet long before he fell into a slumber. His sleep was broken and feverish. Painful was the task now before Dudley; he was to wake to a world of care, and an oppressed heart. Nothing then remained but to arm himself with resolution, to pass through the appointed trial, as best he might. But *he* walks but ill who carries the barbed arrow in his breast!

Constance no sooner entered the breakfast-room, than she was met by the kind glance of Dudley ; he appeared silent, dejected, and thoughtful ; her appearance was strongly indicative of the mental struggle in which she had passed the night, nor could she evade the condolences and inquiries of all present. Mrs. Dunbar suggested a thousand remedies for headaches. Her "dame de compagnie," Miss Sowerby, who knew "Buchan" by heart, recommended camphor julep. The General proposed an excursion to a neighbouring village, where the remains of a Roman tessellated pavement had lately been discovered. Lord Atherley seconded the proposition, and suggested that a rural luncheon would be a "capital thing;" Lady Atherley could drive Mr. Ravensworth in her pony phaeton ; the air was so *exhilarating* that it would quite renovate him, and give them all appetites : the rest could ride."

" You will trust yourself to Constance's coachmanship," continued Lord Atherley ; " the drive will do you both good."

Dudley hesitated, he felt that a tête-a-tête would be peculiarly painful. Constance seemed to penetrate his feelings, and with a trembling voice told Lord Atherley she thought it too early in the season for an open carriage ; but he would not hear her, and almost forced them to a measure to which they were mutually adverse. The plan being unanimously carried, the party were not long in putting it into execution. It was a bright joyous sunny morning, undimmed by a single vapour, resembling more, in the beauty and clearness of its atmosphere, a spring day in the genial clime of the South.

No sooner did Dudley find himself alone by the side of Constance, than the recollection of the friend of his youth, and of the happy days passed in her society, confounded his reason.

He sat mute and absorbed; Constance what was passing in his mind, and endeavoured in vain to divert the current of thought, remarks on passing objects. "It is a time since we have met, and years make changes." The colour rushed into Constance's cheek, and she kept her eyes bent upon the ground.

"Constance!" he said (for the feel of his heart would not suffer him to address her by a colder name); "Constance, I have much to say to you, much that I have wished to say; fate seems to have placed an hour at our disposal—let us not waste it."

Constance was silent, and after a pause looked at her. "No!" she replied at length, looking up frankly, with the full light of eyes beaming upon him; "No! our hours of mutual happiness are over!—over, and ever! We must return, Mr. Ravensworth; you seem ill."

"No! Constance, not ill—it is not illness which overpowers me;" his voice was scarcely audible, he regarded her with painful interest.
"Constance!" exclaimed Dudley, and there was sadness in his tone; "the last few hours have been like a painful dream. If you knew how acutely I have suffered, you would at least feel compassion for me."

"I cannot bear to see you thus agitated," replied Constance; and the tone of anxious affection in which these words were pronounced went to his heart. "If what you wish to say is painful for you to utter, wait till you are stronger and calmer."

"I *have* strength to speak now, and you must hear me!"

"I will," Constance faintly replied.

"There was a time," said Dudley, "when words were unnecessary to enable us to understand one another; when the same thoughts would occur to us both, and a look would

question. Who has
Who has injured m
me but to whom I c
vindication may at
blush that once I
share^e of your affectio

“ It requires not t
stance with much soft
been alienated ; we pa
under a misconception
have heard from you,
written,—but scarcely
land, when my hope
mother’s commands th
respondence with you.
loved another ; my he

What could I do but believe: but, be
ied,—and generously forbear to reproach

Are you then unchanged?" exclaimed he
gently. " Is your feeling alive for me
?"

I have said it," cried she, hastily inter-
ing him; " but as you value my friend-
and earthly peace, exact from me nothing
."

Thanks, thanks! Forgive me,—say you
me!"

stance's low stifled sob was her only
er.

ll health," responded Dudley, " the sur-
of last night, have worked upon an over-
d frame; never again will I offend; it is
st time I will yield to such weakness:
ll be but as friends; surely, such disin-
ed friendship as ours will be, must be,—
ken."

Constance faintly uttered “ You will ever have my good wishes through life ! ” Dudley respired again, and, mastering his feelings briefly recapitulated all his adventures. Nothing was left unexplained, nothing untold by him that could clear himself from the charge of having, for one moment, any aim but obtaining her love : his letter through Miss Cressingham, his meeting with Jane Ashford, his accidental visit to the gaming-table, were unravelled and he recited “ the story of his life even from his boyish days.” Her cheek coloured, and tears the pure messengers from the heart, glistened on her long eye-lashes — they penetrated his soul, they were both very happy, and a full hour passed unheeded ; not another word was spoken ;—their hearts were full, far too full for words,—and yet there was a consciousness in the sad interchange of looks, which seemed

“ As if their souls that minute caught
Some treasure they through life had sought.”

It was the first moment of real positive enjoyment Dudley had experienced since he left England; a feeling of renewed life seemed to seize upon his senses. Cheered in spirit by the renewal of a friendship which they both so truly valued, they were scarcely aware of their arrival at the spot selected for their rural repast. It was a wild wooded glen, through which a stream wound its serpentine course, overshadowed by lofty trees; the luncheon was spread, the bottles of champagne were cooling in the clear rushing stream — the party was assembled —

————— “and there,
Merrily seated in a ring, partook
A choice repast.”

Lord Atherley had arranged the pasties, pies, turkeys, and all the *comestibles*, and was ostentatiously displaying the bill of fare. Bécasses aux olives, salmi de perdreau, faisan aux truffes, cailles à la financière, pâté de lièvre, filet de

chevreuil sauté au vin de champagne, jambon à la gelée.

"Ah," chuckled Lord Atherley, "to what perfection have they brought the science of cookery, here we have all the luxuries *in and out of season*—“on connaît l'homme à ses actions, et le cuisinier à ses ragouts,” so says *Le Sage*. The noble epicure was busily employed selecting the truffles from a “terrine de foie gras,” for his own especial eating, when the pony phaeton drove up. Then amidst the usual expressions of “lovely day,” “beautiful drive,” “perfect spot,” “charming view,” Lady Atherley was assisted to alight.

“Almost too late, Constance,” said her sposo; “but stay, take a little of this galantine, delicious—excellent! or this *Dindon aux truffes*, perfect!” Little did he know they had communed with their better natures; all the jarring cares, the vexatious contentions, the wayward passions had sunk into nothing-

ness; they had felt the calm pleasure of lovers, explanations, surmounting even a state of hopelessness. As usual at all pic-nics, in this vapour-encumbered climate, there was a deficiency of enjoyment after the first burst of admiration was over; there was a languor, a want of spirit, an absence of union that could not be got over.

The luncheon over, the party amused themselves in different ways, and for once, in a party of pleasure, it was agreed that the weather was perfect. Constance and Ravensworth, on their return, had been driving for some time through green shady lanes, those lanes peculiar to "Merrie England;" they felt the beauty of the sweet-scented hedges, of the wild flowers scattered about, and the "lonely thatched cottage" covered with roses and ivy, nestling in its orchard overhanging the road. Conscious of not another thought but that of each other's presence, the party in the phaeton

enjoying the beauty of the scenery, and the sun had nearly faded from the sky, when they were suddenly startled by the flickering motion of the leaves, followed by a distant roar. Dudley now observed the sky overcast; the wind had gathered vapours and it had charged the distant horizon with a dark cloud-sea: the clouds were tinged with a reddish fiery gleam, and seemed ready to explode. At length the patterning of some heavy drops of rain warned him of the coming storm; the trees waved like fields of corn; soon the lightning glared slightly, and the thunder threatened only a murmuring war, till, as the heavy-laden clouds were borne nearer, a fitful gleam, successive and broader flashes appeared and illuminated the sky, followed by the accumulated thunders of a thousand storms; then succeeded a moment of dead calm — all was silent. At last the cumbrous drops of heavy rain descended in torrents on the parched

earth. There was no time for reflection ; Dudley, drenched and terrified, urged the horses on ; they entered the avenue ; the blossoms of the wild chesnut-trees fell thick around them ; a fearful flash gleamed, then there was another frightful glare of sulphurous lights, and the roar of the thunder (Heaven's artillery !) was augmented by the splintered trees that fell on all sides. One of the finest oaks was riven into splinters by a thunder-bolt.

"It is over, Constance," whispered Dudley ; "it is over ; thank Heaven ! "

"What a happiness to have you near me at such a time !" exclaimed Constance, looking up with thankfulness. At that moment the clouds dispersed, and a ray of sunshine broke through the dropping foliage, and fell on the hapless yet happy pair !

CHAPTER XIV.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

Cloudy mists every valley and hill buries ;
Spurred and booted on sofas we sprawl.
Back with the galloways, put up the tilburys,
Sad wet weather at Drizzledown Hall.
One cannot read Waverley twice over cleverly ;
Talents should never lie idle a day :
Best of all madrigals, private Theatricals !
All that we want is to settle the play.

JAMES SMITH.

AVESFORD PRIORY was an old Elizabethan building, and owed its origin to an abbey founded by Hubert de Wallingford in 659. In those days the building was appropriated

to monks and nuns of the Benedictine order. It was destroyed by the Danes, but rebuilt after the conquest. In the reign of Henry the VIII. it shared the fate of other monastic institutions of England. The ruins of its magnificent church still remained, and the present mansion, an old, Elizabethan building, combined the ideas of ancient baronial grandeur with those of modern date. The party there assembled consisted of the host and hostess, General and the Hon. Mrs. Dunbar : the former had *lifted*, as the Scotch phrase it, a handsome fortune in the East, and had laid it at the feet of the Hon. Margaret Blakiston, the daughter of a Madras judge. The General had been a great traveller, and indulged in those *longbowian* propensities, usually attributed to travellers, whether at home or in foreign climes. His description of the monsoon was his favourite topic. "Awful ! terrific ! Wind blowing the tall, slim cocoa-nut trees into the air ! Light-

ning gave you an idea of a general conflagration!—thunder awfully loud, as if the whole earth was undermined, and was saying as much!—fish blown from the sea by the violence of the gale, and found alive upon the flat roofs of the houses! Oh! frightful, terrific!" Mrs. Dunbar was what is called "the best creature imaginable," strongly addicted to a "snarley yow," King Charles's spaniel named "Fay." No individual felt more strongly the importance of asserting that canine partnership in the trade of the affections, which was based on the old saying of "Love me, love my dog." Hence her great regard for Dudley, who had, previous to his going abroad, saved the Fairy from the fangs of a huge mastiff.

Miss Sowerby, a most primitive pattern of preciseness, very tall, very strait, very silent, very cold and very correct, was a "young person" of forty, a perfect polyglot of languages, a pedant in petticoats, a vocabulary

of polysyllabics. To her learned lore of ancient and modern history, geography, astronomy, botany, experimental chemistry and philosophy, she added the modern accomplishments of varnishing and gilding, and japaning, and etching, and modelling; and engraving, in mezzo tinto and aqua tinta ; she excelled in the manufactory of card-racks and hand-screens, and, for her board and lodging, and a new year's cadeau of two silk dresses and a velvet bonnet, made herself generally useful as a *souffre-douleur*, anglicè toad-eater. She was active in washing, combing, and walking out with Fay, keeping her in blue ribbons; turning over music, playing quadrilles, country-dances and waltzes; listening to everlasting stories with indefatigable patience, attention, and approbation: she added to all these the cutting the pages of new novels, drawing patterns, mending all the pens, making alumets, winding silk, sorting worsted, looking after

the birds, watering the plants in the drawing-room, arranging sofa cushions, keeping accounts, and writing confidential letters. She was looked upon in the establishment as a "*meuble de plus.*" Miss Sowerby had been brought up at Minerva House, Paragon, Hoxton, where reading and speaking, writing and arithmetic, foreign languages, geography, geometry and astronomy, biography and mythology, natural history, natural philosophy, address and conversation, poetry, painting and music, dancing, dress, housewifery, needle-work and embroidery, stepping into carriages, and gymnastics, were all taught, (board and lodging included, and young ladies finished,) for the small sum of twenty to twenty-five pounds, per annum; the same young ladies to bring with them six towels and a silver spoon,—meditated fixtures.

Among the gentlemen, the most conspicuous by means of his dress, was the Hon. Augustus

Priddie, a lisping Werter-like looking youth, highly romantic, brim-full of sentiment, with dark curly hair ; he wore his shirt-collar Byronically tied with a black riband ; adored his original,—was strongly addicted to theatricals, was *au fait* at all the coulisse scandal,—and in short, was one who lived by his wits. He was *the man*,—

"Who, when he puts his hat upon his pate
Claps a ring fence around his whole estate,—"

possessing a sort of *Je ne sais quoi* languid impertinence, he piqued himself upon having gone uninvited to a *fête* at Carlton House, or, as he called it, "having sported a face," and had lately, according to his own version, been passing a week at a house, where, the husband and wife not being upon speaking terms, he had felt secure that neither would take the trouble of inquiring by which he had been asked. He piqued himself on his figure. His

written orders to his tailor, were laconic, " six feet, and perfect symmetry." In fine, he was a pretty a specimen of two yards and a nail or puppyism, as could well be imagined.

The next, who, for forwardness, took care to be noticed, was Harry Bibury, a man who made money by the turf, by play, by horses and who could drive four bloods and a bargain better than any young fellow about town. He was a walking racing calendar, and could tell you the pedigree of every horse from Eclipse down to the winner of the last two-year old stake, and used a peculiar phraseology, better calculated for Tattersall's subscription den than the drawing-room. He cared for nothing; he could do every thing and every body; was very erudite in the art and mystery of giving and taking the long odds, knowingly;—making a book, hedging, and even handicapping, (the mathematics of racing;) a perfect *Jonathan* at billiards,—a Tom Smith in the hunting field,

crack shot,—a first-rate whip,—a good judge of a horse. He was the best amateur sparrer at the Court, and would undertake to walk, run, or hop a match with any man in the United Kingdom.

Then, there was Horace Latimer, one of that large class which, *par excellence*, come under the denomination of young men of talent. Such men, the pride of their sisters and the glory of their grandmothers, are men of whom great things are expected, and who, after great preparation and promise, end in utter and elegant nothingness.

There were, independent of the above, sundry country gentlemen, Squire Westerns of the olden times, with their wives and daughters;—the latter, being young ladies, slender, fair-haired, blue-eyed scraps of innocence, who passed their mornings in perforating silk with tambour needles,—making note-cases for uncles and cousins, (in those halcyon days of the one-

pound system when gentlemen directors were coming moody, and passing their evenings in "doing" the "Downfall of Paris" cross-handed on the piano; occasionally, perchance, enlivening their concerts with "Young Lochinvar," and "O Pescator dell' onda."

For some days private theatricals had been upon the tapis. The arrival of Dudley had given an impetus to their wishes. Harry Bury proposed him as manager, "a regular fast one, and no mistake." Priddie, who had been at Westminster with him, seconded the nomination, and reminded him of the time when at Mother Pack's, the Deans-yard dame (we speak it not profanely, for a better creature never existed), they had mourned over the dead body of Julius Cæsar, and had strutted and fretted their hour in Norval and Glenalvon.

The inclination to act was now awakened and encouraged, and by none more so than

by the host and hostess. "The Avesford private theatricals would enliven the neighbourhood," exclaimed the happy pair at once. — For some time Mrs. Dunbar had had them in full contemplation. Unfortunately a love affair, which ended in an elopement between the hero and heroine, had retarded the progress; once the serious illness of the Thespian hostess checked their course; and, lastly, a violent quarrel between all parties had nearly put an end to the matter. At last, after many consultations, a play was fixed on, and was not changed more than twenty times before the necessary rehearsals. — After frequent variations and transmigrations from comedy to tragedy, tragedy to comedy, farce to comedy, interlude to opera; — a death in the family put a serious and sudden stop to the proceedings.

On the present occasion, the first rainy day decided the important question; few of the party

could settle down to any indoor occupation. Billiards, backgammon, chess, battle shuttlecock, were all tried in turn, in vain. Some paced the house from room, — walking from window to window, beating the devil's tattoo upon the floor, “wondering whether it would do.” The library, used as a morning parlour, did not present a very attractive scene. Atherley was suffering under a bad attack of heartburn; — Lord Atherley under a heart-burn, had withdrawn himself into a chair. Miss Sowerby, in an affected manner, was copying music. Dunbar was attentively studying a number of “*La belle Assemblée*.” Worth seemed absorbed in a book. Bibury brought his favourite pointer into the room; — pulled its ears, then turned it out of the room, — took it over his gun-case, and sighed; — laid it down, — took up his fishing tackle, and grumbled.

negligently tossed the balls of a bagatelle board.—The General gave an awful description of a storm in India! — Priddie hummed a tune, and devoted himself for a few moments to a young lady, who soon shocked the Exquisite, by saying, “She never wished to go to London.” At this moment Lady Atherley approached, and the Honourable Augustus Priddie, who considered himself completely formed for *la belle passion*, moved languidly. He was a good-natured, showy animal,—quoted his friend, Brummell the First (as he called him), on every occasion. Augustus le désiré had a trick of talking in half-whispers. He now approached Lady Atherley, “How unkind to leave town so early!” lisped the *crève-coeur*, displaying his worked handkerchief breathing the odorous perfumes of Arabia. “What, in the name of wonder, could you find to amuse yourself with in the country? it was

countryman. You ought never to have bananas and strawberries and cherries become pleasure-food."

"I am indiscriminate enough to like the country in spring. Besides, Lord Athelney's services rendered so necessary," replied Lady Athelney.

"What is this? Some old-fashioned times would abhor a country-shop extremely well — Don't mention the vile campagna — the poet's system, your rustic temples, those seems gay pastures, sunny glades, shady groves, delightful walks, pebbled pavements, loggias & fresco, cooling down living rocks — they are odious. Then the vulgar vegetation is always in a torpid state — naked shrubs, barren as lances, "Coyper, I think, describes them. O Cib! London and its beauties for me!" here he cast a glance at a large looking-glass in the room and kept continually gazing!

himself, setting his neckcloth, and arranging his curls ; — “but, positively, Lord Atherley must not be so Gothish as to take you away before the season. ‘T was inconsolable,—*au désespoir*,—positively staid away from one opera,—honor bright.” Here the amiable Destructive tried to look sentimental, held his eyes bashfully down, and heaved a sigh, so piteous and profound, that it seemed to shatter all his bulk and end his being.

Dudley joined the party. “We were talking of the opera,” said the Narcissus, still adjusting his hair; “the divine Catalani, how classical her appearance !” This was a theme the Honourable Augustus liked to dwell upon; and he ran over the names and respective merits of every opera singer and dancer with incredible volubility.

“Talking of plays, Lady Atherley,” said Mrs Dunbar, entering the room, “the General

and I have settled the night for our opening — let us adjourn to the little library, henceforward our green-room." A council was formed and Dudley was unanimously invested with managerial powers. All that was then required was the song says, "to settle the play;" and the business of finding one that would suit everybody proved to be no trifling task : then commence the difficulties to which managers are " heir to ;" the first squabble began whether the play should be tragedy, comedy, or melo-drama. Augustus Priddie and Mrs. Dunbar were for tragedy : the former lisped, the latter could not pronounce her *r*. But then the dress would be so becoming ! Hamlet, Douglas, Jane Shore, or even a scene out of Othello, was suggested, but in vain, the hint was scouted ; the General was arbitrary, and would hear of nothing but comedy.

" *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Liar*," whispered Priddie, (piqued at not being able to

"rant and tear a passion to rags,") "would be the most appropriate."

The difficulty was at length got over by Dudley suggesting the Screen and other "connecting scenes from the School for Scandal," an occasional address by the Hon. Augustus Priddie, and some *tableaux vivans* for those who thought "beauty needed the foreign aid of ornament." The proposition was met with a general acquiescence; Priddie was particularly pleased, both with the thought of his dress and address. The *dramatis personæ* in the School for Scandal were soon filled up; the General would be quite at home in Uncle Noll; the Atherleys would do the Teazles to the life; and Lord Atherley shrugged up his shoulders, and a jealous twinge ran through his heart, when he thought of the opening speech, "When an old man marries a young wife, what is he to expect?" &c. To do Priddie justice, he possessed an equal willing-

ness to take either the parts of Joseph or Charles Surface.

“Mr. Ravensworth *must* be Charles,” exclaimed many voices; it was, therefore, so settled. Mrs. Dunbar would “walk on” for the gentle “Mawia”—so she called it; innocent and simplicity in a muslin dress, with a blue sash.

The play being thus settled, a large gallery was immediately to be converted into a theatre. Money was (to use the General’s own words) no object; carpenters, scene-painters, from the neighbouring town, were forthwith set to work, and, in less than ten days, the edifice was completed. Every thing was now in train; the actors, actresses, and dresses were getting forward, rehearsals were taking place, and, as usual, nobody attended punctually, nobody remembered the sides at which they were to come on, and nobody observed the directions of the prompter. Augustus Priddie had written “an

address for the opening of the Avesford private theatre," which he spouted morning, noon, and night to every body around him, and himself ! The night arrived ; all being assembled, the bell rang ; an overture was played ; the curtain drew up.—Augustus Priddie made his appearance, dressed in a black bugled velvet Hamlet's dress, and in a profusion of feathers, making him look like a very respectable living hearse. He advanced to the lights, and, after a considerable number of bows,—began ; —

* Like a young lover, in whose anxious face
His modest yet ambitious hopes you trace,
To plead the cause of our untutored band,
And claim indulgence from their friends,—I stand :—

And true enough, stand he did ; — for not one other word could he utter ; in vain he looked for the prompter, who had been called away to " go through a scene with Mrs. Dunbar." After some little delay, that most important personage appeared at the wing ; but

unfortunately, no copy of the address had been retained. It had been sent to the county newspaper, with an elaborate critique on the admirable manner in which the honourable speaker had composed and delivered it. After stammering for some time, and repeating

—“indulgence from their friends, I stand!”— he proceeded in the following disjointed manner, —

“ To plead,— to plead,— I trust,— we trust the cause
Of our endeavours — merit some applause —
Applause — no, I forgot! —
Not approbation! from the crowd we ask! —
—— Be this our highest prize —
A smile from beauty’s cheek, or tear from beauty’s eye

a round of applause from some “ claque” headed by La Fleur, (the honourable speaker’s gentleman in the gallery, which had been erected for the “ High life below stairs” company,) welcomed this effusion. The curtain then rose for the comedy, and the last act

the School for Scandal commenced. With the exception of Lady Atherley and Dudley all seemed vapid and without merit. This performance reminded one of the story told by Sheridan, who, on being asked at an amateur play, "whom he liked best," replied, "the prompter; for I have heard more, and seen less of him than any other!" Constance's performance was the *beau idéal* of well-bred animation, gay intelligence and lively variety; with a voice brilliantly modulated, a taste most refined, she imparted a charm and vivacity to all around, perfectly enchanting. In the scene where Lady Teazle is penetrated with gratitude at Sir Peter's generosity, Constance appeared to still greater advantage; her eyes, her pathetic voice, her dejected air, and penetrating countenance, went to the feelings of her auditors. Lord Atherley was so overcome and enraptured, that, at the peace-making he pressed her lips with so much tenderness, as to draw

have a record of approbation, on this, his only natural hit of performance. Dudley evinced the greatest taste, spirit and judgment, giving life and meaning to every sentence. The General knew not the ghost of a line, filling up the pauses by making faces at the audience, and giving his own, instead of the author's words; and the lively young "Mawia" was the essence of insipidity. "the sublime of mediocrity."

The curtain fell amidst long and loud applause.

The following morning the county paper and *Independent Gazette* "opened."

AVESTFORD PRIORY.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

"This elegant entertainment was most amply distinguished for the charming taste with which every accommodation was provided and disposed ; artificial flowers embellished the

gardens and grounds, (which were brilliantly illuminated,) where Nature withheld her decorations. A temporary theatre was erected in the long gallery ; the building, beautifully and classically arranged, was considered as highly characteristic of the wealth, taste, and refined elegance of the liberal host and hostess ; at a little after seven o'clock, the company, which was numerous, brilliant, and very select, began to arrive.

"The performance commenced with a most pointed and brilliant address, attributed, we know not how truly, to the pen of the Hon. Augustus Priddie, and which was spoken by the reputed author with a fascinating excellence that particularly displayed the wit and elegance of its writing. The celebrated Screen scene from the School for Scandal was most admirably represented. The principal male performers were General Dunbar, Lord Atherley, Hon. Augustus Priddie, Hon. Dudley Ravens-

worth. Where all were excellent it would be invidious to select; but we cannot withhold our humble meed of approbation from General Dunbar, who sustained the part of Sir Oliver Surface with an energetic faithfulness to his audience and his author, and an accurate discrimination, that were irresistibly impressive upon the feelings of all present. Maria was performed with all that taste, pathos, and classical propriety which so eminently distinguish the sensibility and accomplished mind of the modern Thalia—the hon. Mrs. General Dunbar. This selection was followed by some *tableaux vivans*, arranged by the talented hostess, and possessing all the merit of taste and genius which always characterise her plans, or performances. A masterly band of music attended on this occasion. At an early hour the whole party sat down to supper, consisting—as of course it would,—of the most sumptuous

ids of all the varieties luxury could suggest
the seasons produce, in a most exquisite
ice of plate richly decorated ; the disposi-
of the lights—the arrangement of the tables
side-boards — the bright constellation of
ty and youth, heightened by every possible
lishment, and the charms of artificial
ony, ameliorated by the animated prattle
uman voices—created such variety both to
ye and ear, as to produce the most pow-
general effect. A dance then commenced,
h lasted till a late hour next morning,
the parties broke up, with no other regret
that they had enjoyed the society of each
so short a time, and that the period of
separation could not be longer post-
d."

ctors disagree, and so do editors, for
County Telegraph gave the following

:-

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.—AVESFORD PRIORY.

"The performances commenced with an occasional address, which the Hon. Augustus Priory attempted to speak. It was a miserable failure, pointless and vapid. Of Lord Atherton in Sir Peter Teazle, we can only say we ne'er witnessed a more imbecile performance. General Dufferin is (as a performer on the board) mere stick, and the whole representation not unworthy of Scowton's booth, who, if readers recollect, figured last year at our giving us a melo-drama, two murders, a ghost, a comic pantomime, a song in character, two dances, an overture, and some incidental music, in the small space of twenty minutes.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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COMPTON AUDLEY.

—
VOL. II.

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OMPTON AUDLEY;

OR,

HANDS NOT HEARTS.

BY LORD WILLIAM LENNOX.

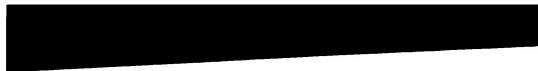
The hands of old gave hearts ;
But our new heraldry is— hands not hearts.
SHAKSPEARE.

Un tel hymen est l'enfer de ce monde.
VOLTAIRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
—
1841.



|

COMPTON AUDLEY.

CHAPTER I.

AUTOGRAPHS.

“Your *hands*, your *hands*, my countrymen.”
VIRGINIUS.

It is one of the vulgar errors to believe that to be rich and liberal is the only requisite to become the “veritable Amphitryon;” but those who have weighed the matter, and reflected on the qualities that are indispensable to merit this title, will soon be convinced that a good Amphitryon is a *rara avis*. True it is, that with money, a first rate *chef de*

cuisine, — a clever butler, and “ all appliance—
and means to boot” which constitute a good
table, a good dinner may be accomplished ; but
it will prove a very tedious and insipid repast,
if the host has not the talent of as well select-
ing his guests as his viands, and as well
arranging them.

It was one of the public days at Avesford Priory, and a large party of the neighbourhood was assembled—a heterogeneous mass had been invited, and were commingled in the drawing-room. That universally admitted empty, tedious half hour before dinner seemed most especially irksome on this occasion. The party consisted of thirty. At last dinner was announced, and the General led the way, making use of that oft quoted line, “Stand not on the order of your going, but go !” Dudley was coming forward to offer his arm to Lady Atherley, when a young country squire, dressed in the most *outré* fashion of London exquisiteness, with rings, brooches, gold chains,

most redolent of perfume, and whose ideas of high life were borrowed from the coffee-room of Fladong's, approached—and with a “May I have the honour, Mem?” carried away the prize. Constance's patience was rather put to the test. On one side, the Bond-street lounger (now happily the race is almost as extinct as the street), and on the other, an elderly gentleman, extremely deaf, and thinking everybody possessed of his own infirmity, bellowed most loudly the few remarks he ventured to offer. Of course, the conversation began *à l'anglaise*, in remarks upon, and admissions of, the state of the weather; and Constance stood a cross fire.

“Beautiful day,” cried the deaf gentleman.

“Oh, very!” responded the exquisite, smoothing his incipient whiskers; “a little too cold.”

“Rather! Any news in town?”

“None.”

“Fine place, this Mem,” said the young squire to Constance,—who, giving a monosyl-

lactic reply, was relieved from all further conversation; the exquisite thinking, that there was no such uphill heart-breaking labour as that of talking to an impenetrably-repulsive person. The old gentleman did not presume to speak to her, not having been formally inducted into an acquaintanceship. How well is this English feeling characterised in a French piece, where a man at the risk of his own life, saves a lady's.

"Have you thanked your deliverer?" asks her guardian.

"Oh, no, Uncle, you know I have never yet been properly introduced to him."

Among the other guests were members of parliament, divines, officers, magistrates, bankers, merchants, poets, amateur authors, and medical men. The senator was placed next to the merchant; the learned judge next to the young ensign; a celebrated divine found himself seated between a poet and an amateur author.

The author attempted to speak of his last tragedy (which had been unmercifully damned,) to the divine, who tried to turn the subject to his last charity sermon, through which he had been giving a similar fate to a bevy of terrified lumpkins, and who comprehended nothing of the intrigues and cancan of the *coulisses*. The M. P. commenced a discussion with a West Indian proprietor on the subject of the Emancipation Bill, who answered him by the "stagnation of trade" in the sugar market; and black slave against brown sugar, and half cast liberty against best white lump,—kept up a skirmish between political rights and grocerial interests. The banker enlightened the young officer by conversing about the affairs on "Change," on commerce,—his respective gains and losses, and who were good, and who not; while the flagbearer, in return, enlightened him with "standing orders," regimental affairs and military movements; interspersed with anecdotes of "Smith, Jones and Thompson."

son" of "ours," and practical pleasant the mess-room. The military man scribing to the judge an *affaire de* with a little milliner, which was not v likely to come in a judicial shape before learned pundit. Indeed, the conversa instead of being general, sensible, and att was "a thing of shreds and patches," i lionian confusion of tongues.

The dinner passed away; the desserted; Constance listened with pat the every-day remarks,—dull repeti old news, and heavy pointless jokes. that freemasonry, which ladies so well stand, took place; and the gentlemen one chorus scrape of the chairs, and a taneous rustle of dresses, were left to selves,—an additional stimulus to stupi

The gentlemen at length came in drawing-room: whist parties were ma Constance did duty at the piano for half an hour, when a young lady of

talent, quite untaught,—a natural genius,” as her friends pronounced her to be,—relied her.

Dudley now approached Lady Atherley, who, welcoming him with a smile, made room for him on a sofa; “I have often promised to show you my scrap-book, but you must not be satirical. I know how severe you are, on albums and autograph hunters.”

“Indeed, Lady Atherley, you wrong me. I own I have a horror of that refuge for the destitute poets,—an album! with their lines to memory, hopes, farewells, trophies, joys, sorrows, meetings, suns, stars, tears and smiles.”

“Do you remember the description of an album in L’Hermite de la Chaussée d’Antin, ‘La confusion des langues n’était pas plus complète à la tour de Babel. Figurez vous du Français, du Latin, du Chinois, des dessins, des vers, de la musique, de la prose, voire même de l’algèbre, enfouis pêle-mêle dans le même recueil.’”

"But the letters, nay, even signatures of celebrated people are most interesting," replied Dudley; "as witness this, (turning to a letter signed 'Wellington,') whose name will live for ever."—It was a mere order to Bicknell for a hat to be sent post to him in Spain.—"And yet Cyprus and Babylon, Alexander and the Granicus, Hannibal and Cannæ, the brilliant victories of Cæsar, the triumphs of Augustus, the conquests of Charlemagne, the Crusaders and Ascalon, Charles of Sweden and Pultowa, Marlborough and Blenheim, Napoleon, Marengo and Austerlitz; — all swarm around this one name, to be associated or contrasted with it; 'Wellington and Waterloo!'"

"You speak enthusiastically of the hero," said Lady Atherley; "but he must be dear to all English hearts."

Dudley gazed, and passed on. "Here is one," he again said, "that disproves what Rasselas said to Imlac, after he had been enumerating the numberless qualities necessary

to the perfection of the poetic art. ‘Enough ! thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet.’ Walter Scott ! the Shakspeare of our time, the mighty master, the magician of the north ; at once the historian, poet, novelist ! What can exceed the description of the escape from Lochleven—the effect and spirit with which it is given ? the whole mustering and march to Langside, as well as the battle itself, are full of life and colouring !”

“ Here is one of John Milton,” said Lady Atherley. “ No one can peruse *Paradise Lost* without a deep sense of the purity and grandeur of Milton’s soul.”

“ Granted,” said Dudley ; “ and here is one of Byron ; a letter to his Mary. Misunderstood, calumniated Byron ! what can exceed the union of sublime, passionate, and imaginative thought, which embodies all his poems ? He ‘ possesses an empire over the heart, and leads the passions captive !’ ” And here Dudley broke

out into an under recital of the following lines—

“ And if my voice break forth, 't is not that now
I shrink from what is suffered : let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak ;
But in this page a record will I seek.
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Tho' I be ashes ; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse ;
That curse shall be forgiveness ! ”

“ Coleridge too ! and I see you have added what he says on poetry. ‘ The poetry of the imagination, although it may glitter more, is neither so rich nor so glorious as the poetry of the heart. We have very few poets of the latter description. In childhood, and sometimes in youth we are alive to the poetry of the heart. While the mind is still pure and artless, devoid of every thing that can be termed sinful—free from anxious and corroding care—all nature appears to us very much as Eden appeared to our first parents. ”

“‘Everything upon which we gaze seems to be good, and lovely, and beautiful. Our hearts claim acquaintance with all that meets the eye, and we feel deeply impressed by every little event which takes place around us. To such poetry as this the beautiful inhabitants of another world are no doubt awake; and as they touch their golden harps, their living souls seem to leap along the strings and float on the harmonious notes, as they rise like incense to the Great Fountain of love and joy. In this world, poetry does not always mingle with devotion, though I believe that a poetic soul is generally impressed more easily with devout sentiments than those minds which are of a more earthly cast.’”

“But I believe that, in the world to come, poetry and devotion become melted into one,—that we are rendered keenly and acutely sensitive to all with which we hold intercourse; and thus our bliss becomes heightened into continued rapture. Indeed the representations of

Heaven which we have in the Scriptures appear to favour such an opinion.

"Wordsworth! a poet of your own!

'One who ne'er ventured for a Delphic crown,
To sue the God; but, haunting your green shade
All seasons through, is humbly pleased to braid
Ground flowers, beneath your guardianship self

"Aye here," said Dudley, "we have
sures — treasures indeed! Gibbon and
taire's correspondence at Ferney, where
former would intrude on the privacy of
latter.

"MONSIEUR,

"Don Quichotte prenait des
Auberges pour des châteaux,
Mais vous,—vous prenez mon
Château pour une auberge.

"VOLTAIRE."

The reply too of Gibbon:—

"En ces lieux Je comptais voir le Dieu du génie
L'entendre, lui parler, et m'instruire en tout point
Mais, comme Lucullus, auquel Je porte envie,
Chez vous on boit, on mange, et l'on ne vous voit

"GIBBON

"Afterwards these two became good friends," said Dudley; "and *apropos* of friends, Voltaire's idea was not a bad one : 'J'ai trois sortes d'amis, les amis qui m'aiment, les amis a qui je suis indifférent, et les amis que me détestent.' I rather think he had 'a preserve,' of the latter ! Boccacio ! good indeed. What can exceed his *naïveté* ; the sweetness of his periods ; the natural grace of his manner !—and bere is Ariosto too ! What a glory to any country to have produced two such poets, as he and Tasso were, with only eleven years between the death of the first and birth of the second ! What can exceed the portrait of Angelica of the former ? His style, gay, tender, majestic, energetic, sublime—Ah, Tasso ! what majesty, beauty, and grace radiate from every page of this immortal poet."

" You have turned over two pages," said Lady Atherley, anxious not to lose a comment from the lips of her enthusiastic companion. " We had nearly missed *this*," continued Lady

Atherley; "Nelson's last prayer, written on board the Victory."

"How painfully interesting!" sighed Dudley.
"What a strange picture of piety, confidence as to Victory,—mercy and patriotism !

' May the great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, for the benefit of Europe, a great and glorious victory!—and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it!—and may *humanity after victory* be the predominant feature in the British fleet ! For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my country faithfully! To him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen ! amen ! amen !

'Victory, October 21st, 1805,
in sight of the combined
fleets of France and Spain,
distant about ten miles.'

"I never saw a more interesting collection,"

remarked Dudley, closing the book. "The signatures alone are of great interest, but the letters are surpassingly so, for they show the minds of the writers; and, as letters have no other object than to communicate our thoughts and sentiments to absent persons, it is a conversation in writing; and thus the style of letters ought to be the same as that of common conversation, with more choice in the subjects, and more correctness in the phraseology. The rapidity of speech causes many negligences to be overlooked, which the mind over the pen has time to reject, be it ever so rapidly employed; and he too who listens, is more indulgent than he who reads."

"True, true," replied Lady Atherley; "the essential character of epistolary style would appear to be the natural, the refined and the easy. And why is it then, that women with cultivated minds write better letters than men?"

"It is because nature has bestowed upon them

more pliancy of fancy, more vivacity and ready thought, more flexibility of imagination, more delicate discrimination." Dudley seemed drawing his pictures from the features and "the mind, the music breathing from the face," before him.—"Female sensibility is more alert," continued he; "more lively; and women naturally express themselves with more facility than men. The reserve which their education and manners prescribe them, often inspires them with more softened and delicate turns; in fine, their thoughts participate less of reflection, their opinions are more connected with their sentiments; and thence that variety which is usually found in their letters,—that graceful facility of passing from one subject to another without effort; those expressions and associations of words, happily married at the moment; and that careless and nice negligence, 'more pleasing than exactness.'"

Here the conversation was broken in upon,

ELECTOR. "And not before it's wanted. Why, Mr. Sheridan, they *do* tell me there are some boroughs where poor fellows get nothing at all for their votes. Now that ought to be looked into, and *thoroughly reformed*."

*MS. Anecdote of Sheridan, at Stafford.

ONE of the best suburban houses in Rat-borough belonged, as is generally the case in all country towns and villages,—to the lawyer;—a red brick house, a slight piece of canvass, propped on slight deal sticks,—nicknamed Veranda—a small strip of garden, a row of Lombardy poplars, like “two files of sodgers, with fixt baganats,” as the Clockmaker says,—with a gaudy plantation of tulips, pinks, and sunflowers; a carriage-sweep, with a large white swing gate at each end,—make up the house of the attorney.

“ Low paled in front, and shrubbed with laurels in,
That sometimes flourish higher than your chin;
Here modest ostentation sticks a plate,
Or daubs Egyptian letters on the gate,
Informing passengers ‘tis Cowslip Cot,
Or Woodbine Lodge, or Mr. Pummock’s grot.”

CHAPTER II.

ELECTION.

A Candidate is a most partikilar polite man, a bere, and a bowin' there, and a shakin' hands al Nothin' improves a man's manners like an electio amin' master's abroad then. Nothin' gives it equal to that; it makes them as squirmly as they cross hands and back agin, set to their j and right and left in great style, and slick it off end with a rael, complete bow, and a smile for world as sweet as a cat makes at a pan of ne then they get as full of compliments as a dog i seas, inquirin' how the old lady is at home, little boy that made such a wonderful smart answe never can forget it till next time.

SAM :

ELECTOR. " Well, Mr. Sheridan, I'm happy we are going to have a reform in the House of Cor

MR. SHERIDAN. " Why, yes, my man, they talk

A grass-green painted door, a brass knob, and a brass-plate, with "FANCLEY, Attorney at Law!" in large letters engraved thereon, were the outward signs of the greatness and grandeur of this man of strife and might.

The interior was no less striking. The front parlour was fitted up as an office for the clerks: the other as the sanctum sanctorum of the mighty oracle. Here were sundry "insignia legalia," calculated to inspire awe. Over the fire-place, was a large engraving, framed and glazed, of the County Gaol and House of Correction; with the grated windows, iron doors, and ornaments of fetters and chains; over these picture was looped an impracticable blunderbus. On each side of this cheering object were hung scores of slips of parchment, vulgarly known by the name of writs; the names of gentlemen in the commission of the peace, tables of terms and returns, sittings in Lincoln's Inn and Westminster; circuits

the judges, lists of the sheriffs, notices of quarter sessions, with various other formulæ, all bespeaking Mr. Fangley's avocation; while piles of empty deal boxes,—like Romeo's apothecary's “beggarly account,”—on which were painted in large letters, “DEEDS, BONDS, LEASES, PAPERS, 1769 to 1814; trustees of the Pugsley Charity;” the names of a few noblemen and gentlemen of the neighbourhood, in large gold letters, furnished the room.

On the table were Burns' Justice, and certain “tape-tied parcels never meant *to draw*.” The most imposing object was Mr. Josias Fangley himself, town-clerk, &c. &c., of Ratborough. He was a man of small stature, neatly proportioned, with a most flexible countenance, made either for frowning, brow-beating, cringing, or conciliating at pleasure. He was about forty years old,—a great tyrant in his little way, a compound of arrogance, ignorance, selfishness, and conceit. He had a tendency

in perplexity, and at the termination of his visitation he invariably wore a black coat and a countenance of the same. He had a small eye and a smiling bald head. His voice sounded like the small-bell, and the thin thickness of a white scarf covered his chin. A nose of health, which was very impudent, was a walking advertisement of law—social discourse for hours on parish settlements, taxes, enclosures, &c. &c.

"Any letters?" inquired this impudent functionary, addressing a red-faced woman in unmentionable spectacles—the house.

"Yes sir," giving a pecket at the same time. "What's this?" said Mr. Fangley, opening a black-edged letter. "Why this is Insley, our Member's solicitor." he scarcely read two lines, when he impatiently flung his hat and cane. "Retired!" was left on his own door.

The mayor and corporation of Rother-

had assembled in solemn council to settle the important affairs of that ancient and loyal borough, when their deliberations were disturbed by the hasty entrance of Mr. Josias Jingley, the town-clerk; that distinguished gentleman seemed "pregnant with news," and, after puffing and blowing for some minutes like a grampus, he endeavoured to put on a lachrymose face as he announced the momentous and serious intelligence of the sudden demise of Mr. Oldfield, the member for the borough. Astonishment mingled with prompt regret, prevailed; the corporate body looked grave, stared all over at itself,—and delivered itself (after much pain of labour) of the following ejaculations:—"It was a most unexpected event. Such a loss to the country! So excellent a member! fifty years their tried and faithful representative! No accounts un-discharged! Only seventy-four years of age! Only always laid up with the gout! What could have killed the old gentleman! Cut off

so suddenly ! No other dissolution near ! I election so recent!"

After a few preparatory hems Mr. Alman Binks rose, and, paying a brief and tribute to the memory of the departed mem expatiated on " the important duties they now called upon to perform, duties which felt they would discharge faithfully, by dicating their rights and asserting their dig as men and citizens." In conclusion, he beg to propose that a deputation should wait General Dunbar, to ascertain his views as fit and proper person to represent their inte in Parliament ; the proposition was rece with cheers, and seconded in a faint whisper Mr. Alderman Dibble, the only dissenting being that of Mr. Grindlaw. This gentle was by profession a solicitor, and for years had been the leader of the oppos party ; by his cunning craft, he had ke awe many of the worthy inhabitants, an " a friend to the people," and an enemy

sinecures and placemen (though be it said *en passant* his father was a pensioner, for no other ostensible reason, than having written a panegyric on a minister of the day), he had obtained great popularity with the mob, who shouted “Grindlaw for ever!” whenever he made his appearance in the streets of Rotherham, at any feverish period. A retainer from a briefless barrister in London, who gloried in the euphonious soul-stirring appellation of Hampden Stubbs, and was a sort of perambulating politician, gave the bustling solicitor a golden dream of hope that he might be induced to come forward on the independent interest.

Mr. Grindlaw, therefore, immediately retired from the court to dispatch a messenger to the above-mentioned patriot, calling upon him, if he had a spark of public spirit, to lose no time in issuing an address to the worthy and independent electors, emancipating them

from the shackles of a purse-proud oligarchy. Hampden Stubbs was not unknown in Rotherham; he was by nature formed to shine as a popular orator; he was a thorough master of clap-trap and invective, not strictly logical though, perhaps, sufficiently so for the majority of his auditors. His speeches were masterly appeals to the passions; his bold undaunted manner, his unequalled volubility, his energetic style, irresistibly impressed the minds of the people with the conviction that he was their disinterested friend, and won from them their applause and admiration. He had pledged himself to vote for slave emancipation, for the abolition of the malt-tax, the house and window tax, the duties upon salt, tea, soap, hops,—for the reduction of the “standing army and navy,—the total abolition of the bishoprics and House of Lords,—for universal suffrage, ballot, and for the repeal of the union for an entire white-washing of the national debt, and pension list; in short, to use an Ameri-

canism, "he went the whole hog." No debt, no taxes, no lords, no bishops, *no nothing!* Having lost all his property by gambling, and being over head and ears in debt, he was, with the fear of imprisonment before his mind, most anxious to get *a seat* at any rate. He had written several political pamphlets on parliamentary reform, and had, on a former occasion, (to use his own words,) "made an attempt to rescue the town from its degrading servility." This patriotic conduct had unfortunately been only rewarded by thirty votes. "Ingratitude, thy name is Ratborough!"

In the absence of Mr. Grindlaw, the mayor's proposition was carried "*nem. con.*;" and preparations were made for putting it into execution. It was about two o'clock,—just as the party at Avesford Priory had finished their luncheon—when a cavalcade was seen slowly advancing through the long line of carriage-road, winding through the domain; it consisted of two crazy glass-coaches, an old

fashioned looking chariot, a small open four-wheeled phaeton, and a large specimen of the blue-bottle tribe, in the shape of a huge indigo-looking one-horse fly, the rate of whose progress greatly belied its name.

"Who can it be? what can it mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Dunbar. Some neighbourly visit was the conclusion of many.

"The mayor and corporation of Ratboroug~~h~~ coming to offer the freedom of their borough, is~~a~~ a gold snuff-box, to Ravensworth, for his gallant services," replied the General.

At this moment a faint blush came over Constance. Dudley observed it. After a few idle conjectures, and a few minutes to elucidate their truth, all could perceive that the mysterious vehicles belonged to the ancient corporation of Ratborough; but the announcement and entrance of the worthy burghers put an end to further remarks.

The mayor and corporate body being duly ushered in, Mr. Alderman Binks, a man majestic

enough on ordinary occasions, but now, with his scarlet gown and gold chain, swelling with pride, and looking "as burly as a Sunday beadle when he has kicked down the unhallowed stall of a profane old apple-woman;" Mr. Alderman Dibble ex-mayor; the recorder, Counsellor Wheezle; Messrs. Hoskins, Budd, Smith, Brown, Leeky, Crickitt, and Jubb; and last, though not least in his own estimation, the town clerk, Mr. Jonas Fangley, smirking and smiling, followed one another. It was a real corporate sight, and did Bathborough honour. The mayor opened the proceedings. He recapitulated the events of their morning conference, and, in conclusion, requested the General to come forward himself, or name an individual "who, at this important crisis, would stand forth to represent their venerable borough in Parliament."

It would be tedious to repeat the compliments that passed on this occasion; the talents and virtues of the mayor, the dignity and unimpeachable integrity of the recorder, the bland

to remedy any evil however glaring, indifference was the characteristic of many individuals whom the world were apt to slight, on account of their not possessing the distinction of wealth and position.

The usually peaceful borough of Rotherham now began to assume an appearance of activity and bustle: the writ was issued and a day not far distant, named for the election of a burgess to serve in parliament. Nothing but the approaching contest was spoken of: the most preponderating and inscriptions were "Stubbs and independence!" "Vote for Stubbs, the poor man's friend!" "Rotherham's pride and England's glory!" "Hampden Stubbs!" "No Ravensworth, no roughmengers!" The butchers' and bakers' boys were screaming out to the tune of "Heigh for the Bonnets of blue," a song, the burthen of which ran as follows:

"Hark! for Stubbs, then, we'll still be with you.
It matters, we bid you adieu!"

Our Hampden 's the man, who has wisdom to scan,
And sever the false from the true ;
For Ratborough, hip, hip, hurrah !
And for Hampden her advocate true !
The law we 'll obey ; it is Freedom's best stay,
So now raise the banner of blue !"

The canvassing began ; nothing could exceed the urbanity and politeness of the candidates towards their possible constituents. The men were "old-fellowed," and grasped by the hand ; their "better halves" coaxed and wheedled amidst the most tender inquiries after their darling progenies, whose teethings were discussed ; the soothing system, or rather sirup, was tried. " Permit me to send a bottle of Mrs. Johnson's real blessing to mothers," said the patriot Stubbs ; their dear little heads were patted, ribbons were distributed ; dinner and tea-parties for the ladies, with French cream, *id est*, " eau de vie," were suggested ; and not a few " goldfinches" with five or ten golden eggs, were pressed upon the wavering voters of this independent borough.

The day — the important day, big with the fate of Ratbrough, arrived, and was ushered in by the ringing of bells; the hustings raised in the centre of the market-place at an early hour a multitude of people, with the colours of the respective candidates, to their station, shouting and vociferating the names of those to whom they were friendly disposed. Dudley Ravensworth, in his usual four, was loudly welcomed by the Whig party; whilst the patriot, Hampden Esq., in an open yellow barouche, decked with laurels and light blue ribbons, was received with the acclamations of the mighty multitude.

The preliminary matters having been settled through, General Dunbar rose, and after a short silence, entering at some length into the claims of the candidate he was about to propose, although a Tory, was disposed to advocate the real liberties of the subject, concluded his exhortation; — “ Beware of those who, under the mask of friendship and the cloak of

zeal for their country's welfare, would artfully avail themselves of your suffrages ; and by your own precipitated assistance procure your own undoing ! Let every elector solemnly and candidly judge for himself, (laying aside all personal prejudice or favour,) whether the principles of the Independents, as they designate themselves, are not calculated to introduce anarchy and confusion ; and until they have convinced us, that they are friends to, and zealous supporters of, the religion and liberties of their country, under the present happy establishment, let us heartily, cheerfully, and unanimously concur for the candidate I have now the honour of proposing—Dudley Ravensworth, Esq., as the most proper person to represent this borough in parliament, notwithstanding all that spirited envy or wanton malice have done to lessen his popularity or defame his reputation."

Mr. Alderman Leeky briefly seconded the nomination, in the course of which he took an

opportunity of throwing a little disreputability especially at Mr. Pennicoate described as a coarse brawler, a citrus mendicant, a man without a single honest name to patch or cover deformity of his private or public character. Now Mr. Pennicoate wasborough Stultz, and had had a serious quarrel with the corporation: who, in consequence, had taken away their custom. He therefore, now, according to the wags, "had taken away his own coat," and looked more "curves" than "men." He, at the conclusion of the alderman's speech, rose to express his opinion. There was as many great orators have before him, "inaudible in the gallery."

Mr. Grindlaw rose, and with a voice delivered himself of the following arraignment: "You have now, brother Alderman, a glorious opportunity of prevailing over the arbitrary dictates of men in power—of exposing the fatal effects of corrupt influence."

emancipating yourselves from the tyrannical
thraldom of those who would trample upon the
most sacred privileges of free-born Englishmen !
Yes ! fellow-countrymen ! like the burning
cross of Malise,

'Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,'

the patriotic flame of reform will pass through
the island, and an army of free men spring
up, unequalled in the history of the world !

'When flits this cross from man to man,

* * * *

Burst be the ear that fails to heed !

Palsied the foot that shuns to speed !'

"I see a gleam of sunshine,—the spark of
liberty ascends,—let us fan the flame ! Can
any man imagine that this borough is con-
cerned only in the event ? No ! brother
dectors ! your country is concerned ; her
eyes are upon you ! Nations are looking
upon Ratborough ! Is this then a time to
look unconcernedly on an event of the most
vital importance ?—an event which may pro-

bably be the crisis of the nation's fate ! If then you have any regard for the welfare of your country,—if any regard for yourselves or families,—any concern for your civil or religious rights,—any love for the world's domestic hearths,—now is the time to convince Europe ! —aye, —Asia ! —Africa ! —(the crucible of slaves !) that we dare be free ! that we will not truckle to those in power, or bend our knee to our country's tyrants !

“Freemen of Ratborough, let us have the proud satisfaction of being the glorious means of putting a check to principles and practices the most destructive to human society !—In conclusion, I beg to propose Hampden Stubbs Esq. as a fit and proper person to represent you in Parliament.”

This speech set the rabble in an uproar, and was loudly cheered by the “blues,” and as loudly groaned at by the opposing Oranges.

“No Grindlaw !” “Who fed the poor on bone-soup ?” “No skilly.” “Who refused

to subscribe to the hospital ?" "Why—Grindlaw;" which called forth the following very trite and true remark from the accused gentleman: "I am here politically; I have nothing to do with the ostentations of charity; what I give, or ever have given, is *nothing to nobody*." At this a whole park of electioneering artillery, consisting of cabbage stalks, brickbats, broken bottles, rotten eggs, and pebbles, was discharged at the worthy alderman's pericranium, and that boiling patriot had all the martyrdom of the pillory for a few minutes, without having (on conviction) legally earned it.

The worthy *schneider*, Mr. Pennicoate, to whom we have already alluded, rose to second the nomination. "Liberty and freedom, gentlemen ! is the birthright of every Englishman ; and liberty, gentlemen, is nothing without the concomitancy of freedom. But, gentlemen, what is liberty ? what is freedom ? when both can be controlled by power. Liberty, gentlemen, is a plant."

"And so is a cabbage," exclaimed a washed artificer, suiting the action to the word, and hurling a fine specimen of the vegetable, of the drum-head species at the head of the sturdy Tailor-Brutus.

The latter, cut off in the thread of his course, sat or rather squatted down amidst the cries of "Snip!" "Remnant!" "Shred Patches!" "Shopboard, why don't you get up and rest?" raised by the "Oranges."

Mr. Glozer, the editor of the "Liberal," got up, and after the fashion of the co-manager, who, on finding the young gentleman who was to enact the ill-fated son of Don Quixote so frightened that he could not bear the name of Glenarvon or his mother,—came forward and pronounced *for* him (holding his trembling hand at the foot-lights,) "This young gentleman's name is Norval; On the Grampian his father feeds his flocks, &c." So Mr. G—— briefly seconded what his friend had intended to have done, the nomination of Mr. Hamp-

Stubbs as a fit and proper person to represent the borough; and he did very much, as if Mr. Rowland had prevailed upon him to use his Macassar upon the heads of the people beneath him. In vain the candidates attempted to obtain a hearing. "Down with corruption!" "Stubbs for ever!" "Freedom, and Old England," shouted the liberal mob; and so liberally had "secret service" money been distributed in the humble muddling form of beer-money,—that the independent cry prevailed. A hundred ragged rascals shouted in full chorus, "Stubbs, the people's choice!" The electors then approached the polling books, and gave their unbiased suffrages,—receiving the thanks of the candidates, and the more substantial ones of their agents in the shape of "refreshment tickets," or, as they were called in Ratborough, "orders for mint sauce."

No event worth recording occurred, except the perseverance of an "*unbought freeman*," who, on being asked for whom he voted,

replied, “*ploomper* for corporation candidate.”

“ You must name the gentleman,” said the obsequious town clerk.

“ Doan’t know he ; corporation candidate.”

“ I will read the names,” simpered Mr. Josias Fangley, which he accordingly did, laying a great stress on that of Mr. Ravensworth, and accompanying it with a knowing wink.

“ That’s he ! corporation candidate. I votes for he !” then, stroking down his hair, exclaimed, “ It’s all right, Mr. Fangley ; I looks to you for the moony.”

“ Stand down !” ejaculated his worshipful.

“ Room for the voters !” responded Fangley.

“ Honour among thieves, Mr. Fangley. I looks to you for the moony !”

The poll books were closed at four o’clock, and the numbers shortly after declared were,

DUDLEY RAVENSWORTH, Esq., 230.

HAMPDEN STUBBS, Esq., 43 (29 doubtful).

The latter looked a perfect picture of *resignation*; whereupon Dudley Ravensworth was declared duly elected. The successful candidate then returned thanks in a "neat and appropriate;" and the unsuccessful one, vented his spleen in a long harangue, the principal topics of which were, "Corruption, emancipation, purity of election, proud oligarchy, and rights of free-born Englishmen." The chosen representative was then, with becoming ceremony, chaired through the town, amidst the usual concomitants—flags streaming, colours fluttering, bells ringing, men bawling, women shouting and waving their handkerchiefs and blessing his handsome face, taps running, and, after a ricketty service of danger and popularity, the elected was landed safely at "The Lamb," where the free and independent electors were to betake of a sumptuous repast.

At the upper end of the room a platform had been raised, at which the newly-elected member was to preside, supported by his friends; the

table was decorated with laurel leaves or ribbons, banners, flags from the pilot-wheel — the band! — as it was called, upon which was placed. At five o'clock dinner was announced. This elegant entertainment consisted of cold fish, ham, tongue, cold meat, raw veal, stale, sour fruit, and grapeless wine, set on soiled table-cloths, steel forks, rickety chairs, and unbedizened tables. The smell over which the room was but savoury scent of the neighbouring kitchens of the tallow candles, rank pure strong tobacco, dispersed over the whole — contended with equal power for supremacy as did the chattering of tongues, the ring of plates, knives and forks, the jingling glasses, the heavy tread of awkward legs of coster waiters, and the noise of the

—two spasmodic clarionets, a shrivelled-skinned big drum, and a relaxed violin — to the auricular senses. The cloth was removed, and *Non nobis* sung ; then there were the usual toasts, the usual speeches, the usual noise ; toast followed toast, cheer succeeded cheer ; corruption was denounced, patriotism extolled : songs, glee, catches, yells, and shrieks concluded the day. Much disorder and drunkenness did hard duty out of doors ; a few necks and many limbs were broken ; and morning dawned upon Ratborough as a place sacred to headache and heartburn.

EDWARD ATTLEY.

CHAPTER III.

DINNER AT MR. HODGEWICK'S.

"The best were best at home;
From whence—the table is ready."

Mr.

"I don't know you may think I have been ridiculous in some points, which may appear odd, preachers seem to have considered the Railway Company a mystery of inattention. These little difficulties however illustrate all the difference between a common and an expert table."

Dr. KITSON

ELIGIBLE FREEHOLD PROPERTY.

SEE SALT TO BE PEREMPTORY!

MR. HOOD,

With feelings of unmixed pleasure and satisfaction
makes known that he is honoured by having been selected
as the

humble individual
for sale by public competition a singularly delightful
Freehold Estate, including

THE PAGODA,

its beautiful park, studded with majestic timber ;
cultivated lands,
teeming with fertility; extensive woods ;
Eden-like pleasure and flower gardens,
allily situate, so as to command the confluence of the
lake with the river Snowford.

The
MANSION HOUSE

nestling under the wings and fostering care of the
surrounding hills,
y which it is delightfully screened from the
importunity of wintry winds ;
the offices are of the most useful description.

The
WOODLAND SCENERY

is of

SURPASSING BEAUTY.

ant banks, pleading in their beauteous form at the
foot of the hanging woods.
ual ivy, which entwines and adorns the countless
thousands of forest trees and plants.

VISTAS,

formed by *Nature's* hand;

The
HERMITAGE,
the fishing pond, a valley teeming in wild lux
the rippling of the waters,
and
pellucid stream gently gliding through the §
the American shrubs,
fresh and green, in little myriads, divesting th
months of anything like *ennui*, or discom
complete
a coup d'œil,
that seems to approach
Elysium,
and produce an effect that would be idle to at
describe through this
feeble effort—

“ There 's nothing left to fancy's guess
You see that all is loveliness.”

The
P A G O D A
is the great Leviathan of the river Snowd
every thing on its banks must yield to its proud s
it betops all cotemporaries.
The recreation of shooting and fishing
is an
AUXILIARY
to an extent that few can parallel.

THE MANSION

is suitably furnished, and the appendages in pictures
and

Articles of taste and virtue
give to it a decided superiority over all its neighbouring
rivals.

The gardens
are in beautiful taste, and the *ensemble* is indicative of a
PRINCELY TERRITORY.

To those who are not averse to longevity, throughout the
world it would be in vain to look for a more
congenial climate;
~~Sixty~~-four is not considered old, and doctors and physicians
have tried their art in vain, and are few
though eminent.

The constituency of the neighbouring
B O R O U G H O F R A T B O R O U G H
will hail with delight the possessor of
this demesne;
and if his principles be worthy of their suffrages he will
probably
WALK OVER THE COURSE.

The roads in all directions are excellent.
Fox bounds are domiciled in the immediate vicinity.
The parochial rates are low.

For particulars, &c.

The above advertisement had appeared in the county papers, and had so captivated Mr. John and Lady Biddlecombe (of whom more anon), that they became the purchasers of the Pagoda, at a price which was probably fixed by the eloquent agent of the vendor, the purchaser, as a mere *bagatelle*; but the vendor, it was vaunted forth as "the highest sum ever paid for such a sale upon terms which no other gentleman in the profession could have accommodated." His per centage amounted to something like five thousand pounds, which, with interest, a deposit received by the vendor, amounted to something considerable. The auctioneer, on being reasonably hinted, in his own peculiar broad way, that he had his doubts, considering the circumstances in which the business had been transacted, that the purchase-money ought not to have been so largely shared between himself and the vendor, made his demand, after some bickering, was remitted; the auctioneer taking something like

two thousand pounds, for a few days of agreeable travelling, and for the infliction of a few hours of horrid bad English upon his auditors.

A few days after the election, the party at Avesford were to dine with Sir John and Lady Biddlecombe. Sir John had been in early life a most respectable grocer, and had been fortunate enough to have held the office of mayor during the visit of Louis XVIII. on his return to the throne of his ancestors. This claim, added to some political influence which the worthy alderman possessed, was the means of the distinguished honour of knighthood being conferred upon him ; and in consequence of the intimacy with the "illustrious travellers," Sir John thought it necessary to take half a dozen lessons from a French émigré, "just to give him an insight into the language," and he had picked up from the vocabulary a considerable number of phrases, which he Anglicised in pronunciation, and introduced upon every occasion. He was

the original who was at a loss to fit the French for *blanc-mange*, and the individual, who, during his *séjour* s^t to get in some old out-standing debt for a box on the night *Relâche au Théâtre* advertised, because he felt assured must be a glorious play to be acted in theatre.

Sir John and Lady Biddlecombe had made a visit to Paris pendant les cent jours, in their own lune de miel; had seen the Louvre and "waddled through the Louvre" in a rose-coloured pelisse, blue bonnet, and green parasol, had shocked the sensitive *beau monde* in the gardens and Châssées; they had strolled to the Jardin des Tuilleries and Père la Chaise; had visited St. Germain-en-Laye and Versailles; had slept over a tragedie at the Théâtre Français; had been "jolly nuwyeed" at the Variétés, where they were siffléed and à-bas'd for turning their backs upon the audience, and where they were w

conscious of their prototypes on the stage in *Les Anglaises pour rire*. They had been dreadfully shocked at the dancers of the opera (my lady sat with her fan to her face during the performance); had dined at the *cafés*, where Sir John abused the waiters, or *garçons* as he called them; ordered beef-steaks and porter; piqued himself upon the right of a free-born Englishman—not to take off his hat on entering; grumbled at the absence of *trottoirs*; laughed at their French gibberish; abused the *John Darns*, and spouted on every occasion—“Angleterre, avec toutes votre fautes, j'aime vous toujours!” Lady Biddlecombe, *née* Jenny Runciman, was the only daughter of a wealthy East Indian, indescribably vulgar from her attempts to ape “gentility.” The wits were not idle on the subject of the lady that had, during the *honeymoon*, added a *plum* to the grocer’s store. Her usual *sobriquet* was the Queen of Candy. Nor did Sir John escape, who, being a staunch Tory, was the object of many politi-

and scorns. The one that had made the deepest impression was the reply of a Whig editor who had been designated as a gross libeller:-
I am a gross libeller, you are a grosser." This was "Mrs."—Anglicè, stingy—incessant—bitter; he was, therefore, called her most dear and dearest friend.* Lady (Rum) Radcliffe—she—for so she described herself—had an emblazoned pink card, to use heraldic language—gartered, engrailed, nebuled, and waved, according extent, was a good-humoured, bustling woman, who interspersed her stories with "When I was in India with Sir Roderick Mardon, we devoted our time to pleasure riding and whist;" hence her parties were always called "*India rubbers*." She talked of Hyder Ally and the Nizam, Calicut, Gungarapettah, Chingleput, Malabar, Gingee, palanquins, and punks; called her garden a compound, her guests public-houses, choultries; claret shrobb; the post-bag, tappal; and lunch

tiffin. Dudley tried to escape the dinner, under the plea of indisposition, but was overruled by the General, who had known the Runctonians at Madras, and who was anxious to increase his political influence by keeping on good terms with the Biddlecombes.

Constance would have given worlds to have stayed away, despite of Lord Atherley's assurance, that the Biddlecombes would give "a capital feed." The dinner went off as such dinners usually do ; there was a party of nineteen at a table that would have held twelve conveniently. Lady Biddlecombe had invited fourteen; but unluckily an excuse came from Dr. Boyle, saying "an untoward event had called him unexpectedly away to attend a sick lady, but that he should be happy to drop in to tea :" the said doctor having dined off a solitary pork chop, and remained away, to give the Avesford party an idea of his great practice. When the doctor's note arrived, great was the consternation at the Pagoda ; for, as we have

already said, such was the euphonious the before-described mansion ;—in plan a modern red brick house, glowing and in the summer sun, with two yew front, one representing a dragon, the peacock, interspersed with a few tall g Lombardy poplars.

It is true, that in the garden there were sundry hermitages and summer-houses for Bagnigge Wells, and an oriental castor looking building, which Lady so she was always called by Sir John, described as “a chaste blending of the simple and the ornamental.” The character of the exterior it would be difficult to describe, as the county builder had been nearly ruined forming a friend of my lady’s, in answer to the question of “to what order of architecture did it belong?” — “To the late Mr. Grin*ticular* order.”

In this temple there was an aviary, exceedingly rich in birds; a parrot, who s

"What's o'clock, Biddle?" "Who are you, Sally?" and "How's Miss Baker?" two parrotets, a Virginia nightingale "*out of song*," (as Sir John used to say of his sugars,) and some happy couples of love birds, not on terms.

Passing through this paradise for the ornithologist, you reached the Egyptian pagoda; here Sir John gave, as he called them, his "dejoones à la fore sheet." The interior was filled with mandarins and josses, "nodding—nid-nid-nodding," their heads over the chimneys, and executed in very bold basso rilievo; forms representing extravagant fictions in Hindoo fable, were, according to Lady B., "noble efforts of human ingenuity, in design and conception unrivalled in modern art, and quite equal to the celebrated temple in the city of the great Bali." They consisted of elephants, large and small, sacred bulls, alligators, hooded snakes, lions, bungalows, bandicoots, jiggerkhars, mahoots, crocodiles, and fakeers. It was rumoured, that a theatrical

tyro, a scene-painter, (whose benefit the late Mr. Grimes had patronised,) had painted the above crude delineations from a pantomime that had the previous Christmas surprised the metropolis, under the title of "The Raje Ghur Mahiskasur, or Harlequin in India." Our description of the Pagoda has carried us from our subject.

The doctor's excuse arrived only three hours before dinner, just as Lady Biddlecombe was fussing about, getting Guava jelly from what she called the press, and arranging her dessert. Sir John was immediately summoned; Lady B. being as superstitious as a Brahmin, and who would rather have fasted than have sat down *thirteen* to dinner.

"Here! Sir John!" exclaimed my lady,
"Dr. Boyle has sent an excuse."

"Dear me!" replied her *sposo*, delighted at having an opportunity of filling up the worthy M.D.'s place, especially on such an occasion, when, to use his own words, the

"nobs," in contradistinction of the *snobs*, were to dine with him. "Who shall we have, Lady B? There's the Sankeys. Mrs. S. is 'horse de combat' in the straw. Then there's the Dobies: young D. has the measles, so probably Mrs. D. would stay 'chaise 'ell;' or the Briggesses! Briggs is away."

"Let's kill two birds with one stone, my love," replied Lady Biddlecombe: "out of the six we may safely, at this late hour, only speculate on one or two at most." So, proceeding to her writing-desk, she dispatched invitations to the Sankeys, Dobies, and Briggesses, expressing her regret, that, owing to the carelessness of her servants, the notes had been mislaid, and begging they would excuse the shortness of the invitation.

In less than an hour, sundry pink notes were brought to my lady; one from Josias Sankey, expressing his delight at the better late than never invite,—and suggesting that as Mrs. S. was unable to leave her room,—he might be

allowed to bring her maiden sister, Miss Lilliacrap. The Dobies were happy to say Master Samuel was so much better that they should be charmed to wait upon Sir John and and Lady Biddlecombe; and Mrs. Briggs congratulated herself that the lateness of the hour (half-past five), would enable her and her better half to avail themselves of their polite attention, ^{as} Mr. Briggs was to return by the five o'clock coach. Judge of the consternation—nineteen instead of fourteen at table! Jacob Pilcher, the factotum, was immediately summoned; under his superintendence, a small unpainted deal table from the servants' hall was allowed to be added, (just as a common constituent on a pressing occasion is joined at the same dinner with the lofty candidate,) much to the horror of Sir John,—who piqued himself upon the treacle-coloured brightness of his mahogany. Lady B. pronounced it to be “an excellent make-shift, and though the white cloth (as her ladyship phrased it) could not be removed,

old look vastly well, and be very French." In the exception of an unfortunate hiatus, since canal between the "make-shift" and dining-table, there was no appearance to repay Lady Biddlecombe's encomiums.

On the arrival of the Avesford party,— it consisted of the Dunbars, Atherleys, Mansworth, and Harry Bibury, at a little past six, they found evident symptoms of impatience in the company assembled in the dining-room at the Pagoda. Twice had Sir Jacob been informed that the pastry-cook, who had prepared the dinner declared that the soups and patés would be destroyed if longer kept

A loud "Now, Jacob, you may bring the dinner," showed the annoyance of the lady knight. Lady Biddlecombe, was what maid called "beautifully got up" in a long velvet dress, ("hot rolls and butter in middle of July," as Lord Ogleby says), a sash-down boa, a green and silver turban, decorated with a huge bird of Paradise, white

gloves bursting at the knuckles, and scowly
getting an inch over a pair of very scarlet &
bows. The introductions then began—"My
son Master Hastings Moira Cornwallis Biddle-
combe!" He was a pale, over-grown, kned-
knosed, straight-haired youth, dressed in
very tight sky-blue jacket, ornamented with
a row of buttons over each shoulder. La
Susan and Captain Yellowly, the former
faded sprig of nobility, the latter an officer
in the East India company's service. Mr.
Mrs. Alderman Libby : Mr. and Mrs. Brig.
Mr. Dobie, who had Joe Miller by his
and whose mind was an ever-springing foun-
of quiddits : one, who according to Horace

"Festum habet in corru : longe fuge, dummodic
Excutias siti, nec hic cuiquam parcer amico."

Mrs. Dobie, Mr. Sankey, Miss Lillicrap !
Quelch, a poet ! the leading article-maker to
county paper, and his niece, Miss Stackpole
the Matilda Lavinia, who filled the "pos-

corner" with lines to birds and butterflies, enigmas, anagrams, and rebusses. A special request was made to Mrs. Dunbar to invite the two latter to the next private theatricals; "for Quelch was really a rising poet,—his satire on the Whigs was so pointed, and Miss Stackpole was about to publish "The Nun of Santa Sofia; or, The Horrors of the Inquisition." Quelch, too, would write a critique on the performance. But to the dinner, which was at last announced; the servants being drawn up "in line in the hall, headed by the butler, Mr. Pilcher, a deaf, asthmatic, yellow-faced veteran, who had a nasty trick of coughing on every occasion when he was spoken to, which gave momentary tinges of purple to the otherwise dead saffron of his visage. My lady's footman, Isaac, a tall, gawky, calfless youth of six feet one, who having lately taken the place and liveries of one of smaller growth,—showed a considerable line of debatable land, between his waistcoat and "smalls," and a not incon-

slender vacuum between his sleeves and hands. Indeed it may be questioned whether visitors were ever seen in greater array. Jim, the coachman, came next, rather robust of the middle, his shoes creaking, his feet slipping, his hair well worked down with mineral oil, and showing two extensive ears looking like Cattonford oysters, only not so white. Sam, the post-boy, was so cased in leather "oh, no, we never mention 'ems" that I could hardly move, and had evidently polished his "high-haws" with waterproof harness-bluing, which gave to the olfactories a most disagreeable assurance of its quality. Last of all came my Lady Biddlecombe's pretty page, a diminutive, fat, Dutch-built boy, with simple unsophisticated name, Francis Jon, had been Frenchified into François; he was dressed in a crimson jacket, studded all over with peppermint-drop buttons, a pair of pepper-and-salt trowsers, with a red velvet stripe down them, a pair of "Bluchers" showing a set

what soiled grey-ribbed worsted stocking. This costume had caused "a tiff" between Sir John and his lady, the latter having been hallooed at in the streets during the last election, when escorted by the urchin. Sundry remarks had been thrown out about the shop attire; "pepper-and-salt trowsers;" "peppermint-drop, sugar-loaf buttons," &c. The company having been wedged into their seats, amidst the hopes of Lady Biddlecombe that they would not be crowded, and the assurances of Sir John that there was "bow-coop de place," Mr. Quelch, who was a consummate pedant, showed it upon this as on every occasion. The soup gave him the first opportunity of displaying his learning; he expatiated upon the black broth of the Spartans, and quoted all the Lacedæmonians said on the subject. He compared the oratory of a modern M. P. to the vigour and eloquence of Demosthenes,—and brought in the pebbles. He coupled a radical seditious promoter of civil

feuds with the virtues and heroic bravery *of* Leonidas or Cato. Despite of the little ~~encouragement~~ courage he met with from his neighbours, her resolved not to quit his favourite topic without a flourish, "Allow me to take a glass of wine with you, Lady Susan," he exclaimed; "or rather five glasses."

"Sir!" responded her ladyship.

"Yes, five; for according to Martial, the Roman gallants used to drink as many glasses to their mistress' health, as there were letters in her name:—

'Yes!—let six cups to Naevia's health go round,
And fair Tustina's be with seven crowned.'"

"Thank you!" replied the formal Lady Susan; "I never drink wine; I shall, however, have much pleasure in taking a glass of water to your wine."

"Water!" replied Quelch. "As Madame Pompadour said, 'Oh, that it were a sin to drink a glass of water, just to give it a relish!'"

Dudley, who had taken Constance in to dinner, and who unaccustomed to make such a rush, as the lions were wont to do at Exeter Change when the time for feeding came, found himself obliged to deposit Lady Atherley in a vacant seat next to Sir John, and by him was requested to divide the ladies, and pass up to the fire, for the Biddlecombes kept up the Indian hot-bed system, even in summer. To describe Dudley's horror is impossible,—to be obliged to leave her—to sit before a huge fire that would have roasted an ox, with nothing but a small screen, that on every occasion would be knocked over by the movements of the servants,—thermometer up to Calcutta, hot meats reeking on the table,—to be supported on one side by Miss Lillicrap, an antiquated lady who had so oiled her artificial curls that she would have been a good walking puff for Prince's Russian oil; and on the other by Mrs. Dobie,—who having just left her son's sick chamber, had for fear of infection so im-

pregnated herself with camphor, that might have been supposed to have escaped from a Lazaretto. Dudley was crammed between the two, and squeeze bored by elbow points through both his —his arms pinioned like a trussed fowl, he could hardly move more than sufficient to extricate a coarse wet napkin from an ring. In his attempt he overturned the cellar, filled with a pyramid of pink. Lady Biddlecombe's superstition was roused.

“Pray, Mr. Ravensworth, throw over your left shoulder;” which request he willingly complied with, much to the discomfiture of Miss Lillicrap. Misfortunes seldom singly; no sooner had this *contretemps* place, than it was followed by Sam’s tripping over the feet of the screen, and depositing a plate of mock-turtle, with eight very tame looking forced meat-balls, (as though a roulette board had deposited its yellow trea-

into Mrs. Dobie's lap. The affair was made worse, by Sam's attempt to wipe off the consequence with a cloth that had, from its turpentine smell, apparently lately seen the neighbourhood of the coach-house. No sooner had Sir John expressed his hope, that Mrs. Dobie had not been scalded,—how she could have been burnt with cold soup, or, as Mr. Dobie whispered, "cold pig," it is impossible to say,—when a bottle of sparkling champagne broke its wiry bonds, and deluged Captain Yellowly with the juice of the imprisoned spirit of the gooseberry; who was not much reconciled by Mr. Dobie's ill-timed remark, "that a son of Mars ought to be accustomed to stand *grape-shot*." The dinner, according to the bill of fare, or "cart," as Sir John, who had translated it into French, called it, consisted of—

2 Potages mock-tortue;—a wretched imitation of the occidental amphibious luxury.

Mullagatawny; the latter, as into it the cook had evidently spilled the whole contents of

Chab

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Un rôti, a

been kept a

ing punster

y-looking paste, with what in our days
be called homœopathic bits of lobster in
terior ;—*Langue de bœuf*, a large glazed
of elephantine size, perforated with
skewers, on which were birds of brill-
plumage, cut out of red carrots and
g like popinjays of the olden time,
again Dobie, on helping the ladies,
uced his accustomed joke respecting
rrulity of the fairer sex ;—*Côtelettes de*
sauce tomato rather cold ;—Pigeons
aux choux; tough “blue rocks,” with
bbage, and decided symptoms of the
House. The second service consisted
n ducks; stale, tasteless, cartilaginous,
looking sweetbreads; greasy spinage,
macaroni; sundry sweets in the shape
ked pears; blanc-manges, and jellies
osegays in their bosoms; raised pastry,
ls, charlottes, &c., &c. Some trifling
es occurred at dinner: Jem who had
d strict orders to take the lobster sauce

round to every body, acted *au pied*, and with one thumb distinctly seen redder than that in which it was persevered in carrying it round for fish had left the room,—nudging and with a sly wink exclaiming, “Z The Guava jelly had taken the place rant for the venison. There was a breakage, by Sam’s tripping over china, which was being washed a Just as the cloth was removed, and and ice placed on the table, the c was heard loudly at the door, “You’ve forgot the Suffly and Fon will Missus say !” Rushing into th deposited upon a sideboard, which hid by a screen, a tray containing smoking dishes. The “tea-boy” c of one, which, burning his fingers, on the floor, splashing Sir John’s clar coat. The gaunt footman was more for seizing the *fondu*, he deposited

and all, between the ices in front of the hostess. After some black looks from my Lady, the servants and *fondu* left the room : then began the usual inquiries.

"How have you dined, Lord Atherley?"

"Oh, capitally, capitally!"

"Dinner been to your liking, General?—Hope you have taken care of Miss Lillicrap. Mr. Ravensworth?"

Dudley's care of Miss Lillicrap, who had, she herself declared, "a sweet tooth," had been to replenish her plate very often with "Charlotte Roos," as she called an ornamental porcupine in cake, studded with almonds, in a frothy sea of Naples soap-looking lather, and considerably impregnated with brandy.

"Hope you don't feel the fire, Mr. Dobie?"

"Regularly burnt out," replied Dobie, *otto voce*. Master Biddlecombe then made his appearance, and, under the promise of a ear, was called upon to repeat what the King of France had said to him: when, rubbing

his hair down with his right hand, and
ing his toes in, with a silly grin he
a running unbroken accompaniment of
as follows: "Please, the King of the
Louis dixhuit, who, by the ambitious
of Bone-partie, was driven from his ki
said to me, 'Vary pretty boy, très jolly
—but will you give me the pear, now
burst of applause rang through the roo
precocious Cicero was petted by all,
the endearing epithets, "sweet little
darling little love, pretty little de
was of course super-saturated with win
fruit, and ice, by the guests, partly
kindness, and partly to get rid of his
some importunities. The little stuff
men showed his gratitude, by inse
fingers in every sweet dish, and rubb
on the sleeves of all he came in cont
Great was the satisfaction of every gu
a very loud "hem!" from the lady p
gave a hint to the ladies to depa

came the searching for gloves, pocket-handkerchiefs, and vinagrettes. Mr. Quelch ran to the door, his poetical-looking eyes in "phrensy rolling."

"Fly not yet!" exclaimed the poetaster.

"At ten we shall summon you to tea," rejoined Lady Biddlecombe.

"Ah! my Lady, as Ovid says, 'nil sine
lt,'"

The gentlemen then began to make themselves a little comfortable; for the time of which we write was one of hard living, loyal toasts, bacchanalian songs, and brimming bumpers: Father Matthew and teetotalism were then unknown. The hounds, racing, and "delishos creeshors," (as Harry Bibury called them,) were the subjects of conversation: the latter had been silent all dinner, in order, as he said, to enable him to make "running for the plate." Dobie told his every-day after-dinner joke, which Sir John led up to, and in return Dobie gave the cue to Sir John for

His remarks about Louis d'Orlais. As full chroniclers, we are bound to give D'Orlais' *bon-mot*, as his patron called it, and which consisted of his defending his spelling on a public-house sign. (which had had purposely painted.) "bear sold beer by assuring the sceptics that bear was right for it evidently meant it was the public owner's brain."

Sir John then begged to call the attention of the company to a "sentence which he felt would be received with as much pleasure as it was given, and drank (*drank* invariably the word,) with the greatest enthusiasm,—he would not trespass further upon their valuable time, than to mention that during his mayoralty,—and in referring to that time he referred to the happiest period of his life,—he had been honoured with the presence of most illustrious individuals: it was be 'mauvaise goot' in him to say more, than that one royal personage, one whose nob-

birth was eclipsed by the nobleness of his conduct, and who possessed in his breast a brighter jewel than even sparkled in his regal coronet, had told him that it was the bounden duty of every citizen never to be backward in coming forward to support the King, the Church, the Constitution. He *had* supported his King, he had supported *his*—he meant the Constitution and the Church; he had been born a Tory, he would live a Tory, he would die a Tory, and he now begged to give, with the honours, a sentiment, “ May the wings of Toryism never moult a feather; and may those pure principles that have placed this country on the proudest pinnacle of mundane pre-eminence, burst triumphant forth, spite of the malignant machinations of misguided miscreants, as religion did of old from the ashes of the martyrs !”

This toast, which had been well learned, was delivered with good Birmingham enthusiasm, and received with cheers, huzzas,

hip, hip, hurrahs!—a few of Sir John's glasses were broken in the confusion of the moment. The bottles were passed; unfortunately, in Dudley's abstraction, he passed the train,—for they were all on wheels,—too speedily over the chasm of the make-shift; all “got off the line,” (to use a *modern* phrase,) and were overturned, giving Dobie an opportunity of singing a line of a then popular song,

“Flow, thou regal purple stream.”

Coffee, and a *chasse-café* were then brought in. “This oddyvie,” exclaimed Sir John, “has been in the family twenty years; it belonged to my late lamented and revered father.”

“What! spirit of thy sainted sire!” again exclaimed Dobie, rather to the discomfiture of the host.

Mr. Jacob Pilcher then announced tea in the drawing-room, upon which Sir John, as “was his custom of an afternoon,” begged to be excused for a moment, whilst he gave orders to his groom, which was in reality

to enable his friend Quelch to propose his health in his absence, and which the poet laureate to the Pagoda introduced with a flourish :—“ Gentlemen, as the immortal bard says,

“ Sit, worthy friends, my Lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth. Pray you keep seat,
The fit is momentary.”

So let us avail ourselves of the short absence of Sir John Biddlecombe to drink his health—”

“ And many happy returns of this day,” responded Dobie.

At this auspicious moment the worthy knight reappeared, and in thanking the company for the unexpected,—he might say,—unmerited compliment, jocosely added, “ They had done him the honour of drinking his health in his absence, and he begged, in return, to say that, at this late hour of the evening—the ladies waiting—he should be equally happy to drink theirs in their absence.”

CHAPTER IV.

CONTINUATION OF DINNER.—DUEL.

It has a strange, quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to bear
Upon your person, twelve yards off or so;
A gentlemanly distance, not too near
If you have got a former friend for foe;
But after being fired at once or twice,
The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

BY

He 'll call you villain — or he 'll call you out.

CRA

ON entering the drawing-room, Duval evidently saw that some unusual commotion had taken place; the effects were plainly visible. We must put our readers in session of the cause:— Doctor Boyle, v

we have already mentioned, the renowned Galen of the district, and whose name rejoiced in the orthodox appendages of surgeon, apothecary, and man-midwife,— was a most inveterate toper; during his sober intervals,— which were few and far between,— he was hearty, good-humoured, and civil; but when the enemy had stolen away his brains, he became coarse, blustering, and quarrelsome, like Tam O'Shanter—

" Wi' tippenny he'd fear nae evil,
Wi' usquebae he'd face the devil."

On his road to the Pagoda he had stepped in to see a patient,— a tough son of Neptune,— who, preferring the practice of the worthy M.D. to his precept,— was indulging in all the luxuries of a glass of grog, and a mild havannah.

" Bless me!" cried the Doctor, " what's this?"

" Only fumigating my room against contagion, and splicing the main brace, just

to keep the rheumatics off," replied tar. "But sit down, doctor; here's to memory of Nelson!"

The son of Esculapius, nothing filled his glass, and, having drunk many mortal memories, became, in time, a victim to the want of that faculty which he boasted.

Nine o'clock arrived, which was the hour at which he was to attend at Lady Biddlecombe's. The fresh air had somewhat restored him ere he reached the Pagoda; but, like Anthony, he was doomed to another termination. It was Lady Biddlecombe's custom of an evening, when she had company, to have a regular tea-party, which, in the phraseology of that day, was called a *chamber*. Dobie called it a *kettle-drum*. A tea-board, in the inner drawing-room, was ostentatiously laid out,—on which was displayed a most superb set of Indian chintz (about which there was a long story,) —

behind which, my Lady's own maid, "Lily," (a somewhat satirical sounding name for a creole,) and Mrs. Hardwick, the house-keeper, were placed to dispense that beverage so grateful to old maids and matrons, —the fragrant bohea—to the company. By the side of the tea-table, a case, of huge dimensions, containing Marasquino, Curaçoa, eau-de-vie, (of course, formerly the property of Sir John's royal friend,) was open to view.

"Most happy to see you, Doctor," said Lady B., with a smirk. "Allow me to offer you a dish of tea."

"No tea, my Lady," replied the Doctor, casting a longing look towards the liqueur-case; "it enervates the nervous system, and a medical man should have the heart of a lion."

"A cup of coffee, perhaps?"

"Coffee, Madam, is a deleterious drug."

"A *chasse-café*," then persevered Lady

Biddlecombe, offering a glass of home cordial. The doctor took the glass, att to say something about Hebe; but it was paramount.

"Mild as an emulsion!" he ex smacking his lips.

Sir John, who, we have already readers, had made a temporary retr the dining-room,—now joined the lad

"Ah, Doctor! better late than ne hope you have been taken care me recommend a glass of 'Crame my illustrious visitor!' Here Sir . interrupted by Mr. Pilcher, who him that the gentlemen wished his for a moment in the dining-roo Doctor, left to himself, proceeded honours of the liqueur-case:—"Ca any lady?"

Strange to say, that though a sious "The idea of such a thing, escaped the lips of the demoiselles

and Stackpole, *cum multis aliis*; — they were induced “just to taste what it was like.”

“Miss Stackpole!” exclaimed the Doctor, looking unutterable things; “even the goddesses might deign such nectar to sip—

“Then lift the cup divine
With rapture to thy rosy lip,”

“You are too kind,” responded the blue.
“I prefer sweet wine to this.”

“Do you?” said the Doctor. “For my part, punch is my favourite beverage; — for, as Horace says,

———— * mea nec Falernae
Temperant vites, neque Formiani
Pocula colles.’ —

Punch is my liquor!” At this classical quotation, the Doctor, — who was the very Coryphaeus of punch-makers, — suited the action to the word, and mixed himself a glass of “spirit-stirring” punch. Another and another, still succeeded; like Richard’s ghosts. So that by the time the gentlemen entered

the room, the doctor was safe in the arms of Morpheus. His legs were stretched out to their fullest extent, — an occasional snore, and the deep-drawn breathings, showed that he had not gone off in an apoplectic fit, — which his short neck and bloated visage might however have well suggested.

Lady Biddlecombe had made up her whist party; — Mr. Quelch had formed a coterie, and was hemmed in by a cordon of the literati: he was panegyrising Miss Stackpole's last sonnet. The General and Sir John were contending a game of backgammon, and deeply absorbed in all the mysteries of deuce-aces, points, blots, hits, and gammons. The Atherleys and Dudley were amusing themselves, looking over a volume of prints. Whether "Queen Mab had tweaked the Doctor's nose," we know not; but at the moment Mrs. Dobie exclaimed, — "Double, treble, and the rub;" and Lady Biddlecombe had declared she "had never sat

behind such paper," — the son of Galen started up and rubbed his eyes, and showed himself evidently bent on mischief. Lord Atherley had just been called to decide a disputed point at the backgammon table,— and Dudley was anticipating a few moments, uninterrupted conversation with Lady Atherley,— when the medical gentleman, in something between a reel and a swagger, approached the ottoman, and took the vacant seat.

" Ah ! Mr. Ravensworth !" exclaimed the Doctor, holding out both his hands, (for he had that anti-Chesterfieldian trick of catching hold of the button-hole,) and literally taking and shaking his friends' hands. Dudley, having the organ of 'touch-me-notishness' very strongly developed, as it would be called in these days of freeknowledgists, drew back :— " happy to see you again in England ; but bless me ! how thin,— ' nil nisi pellis et ossa ? ' The air of Avesford will, I have no doubt,

soon restore you ; " here he cast a look at Lady Atherley.

Dudley, bowing his head, cold him, and rose. He had ever abom Doctor ; without therefore deignin into any further conversation, he Constance ; " Would you kindly tr eet ballad of Moore's, ' When he thee ? ' I will prepare the pianofort Atherley answered with a glance and Dudley disappeared into the i ing-room.

The Doctor then, annoyed ar exclaimed, " Haughty fellow that he who adores thee ! " — pretty cle is. Poor Lord Atherley ! — but L ley, beware, that half-Werter, h is a very dangerous man."

Constance here rose, and was abcceed. The Doctor intercepted her, his voice, said, " Lady Atherley, scorn the advice of an old friend,—1

ber Jane Ashford ! — and the man who would tamper with female innocence as Mr. Ravensworth did in that instance,— would —” here Dudley, who had heard the former part of the conversation, and the allusion to Jane Ashford, stood before him, and, with anger mingled with contempt in his countenance, stepped, we must own, rather brusquely before the Doctor. The Doctor lost his balance, fell against the ottoman, and Dudley turned to Constance, whose countenance exhibited traces of various and conflicting feelings,—and calmly said, “ Be not alarmed,” and led her to the adjoining room.

Constance went mechanically to the piano ; she touched the instrument, nothing could exceed her alarm and dismay,—she stopped and blushed.

“ Pray do not stop,” said Dudley, beseechingly. She hesitated,—again her hands were on the instrument ; she began softly the symphony : at first her voice was tremulous, but

gaining courage as she proceeded, it swell~~es~~ into rich and powerful melody. An artist would have vainly sought a more perfect model for St. Cecilia than Constance, as with eyes upraised, her cheek tinged with a hectic blush, her bosom heaving a gentle sigh, she breathed the touching notes; her enthusiasm led her on, and with a beautiful and mournful expression, an exquisite and matchless tenderness, which embodied the soul and spirit of the song, and gave it breath and life, she sang that plaintive and touching air of Handel's,

" What though I trace each herb and flower?"

Never did she sing more touchingly; the music ceased, she closed the instrument,—and looking round, saw that Dudley had left the room; all her former alarm returned.

Meanwhile Ravensworth sought the Doctor, who had retired into the dining-room, and had fortified himself with the remnants of the bottles, and in spite of his classical lore had quite

written the maxim of Periander of Corinth,
—*κατέχειν τὴν φρεσκότητα* ‘be master of thy anger.’—He
shed his rage with irresistible volubility, in
such menaces and vehement and fierce vo-
cation; but neither his uproarious tumult,
blustering protestations of vengeance pro-
duced any effect—beyond that of contempt,
the mind of Dudley. He calmly observed
he had uttered a most infamous calumny;
the imputations against Lady Atherley
false and scandalous; and that nothing
a most abject and public apology would
suffice his wounded honour.

‘Apology, sir! d—n, sir!’ said Doctor Boyle,
in offensive attitude; “you show the white
teeth; — none of your airs and dignities here
about you wish to have your nose manipu-
lated!”

General Dunbar now came forward, and ad-
mitting Ravensworth, led him from the room.
A few minutes he returned, and expressed
the Doctor the pleasure it would give him,

if he would allow him to offer such an explanation to Mr. Ravensworth as would put an end to so unpleasant an affair.

"To Mr. Ravensworth," said the Doctor, "I have no apology to offer; nothing but my respect for the company prevented my chastising his impertinence."

"Then there is nothing more to be said," replied the General deliberately;—"but to whom shall I speak on your part?"

"Why really that is a puzzling question at a moment's notice; but in the morning you shall hear from my friend." So saying, the worthy but fuddled M.D. walked several steps rather irresolutely towards the door, then stopping suddenly, he muttered something about "satisfaction," "insufferable puppy," "gallant gay Lothario;" and would have probably continued in that strain, had not the entrance of a servant with negus arrested his attention.—"I'll thank you for a glass."—The Doctor inwardly drank confusion to his enemies.

and left the room, describing in his progress such curves, zigzags, and acute angles, as gentlemen when under the influence of the enemy commonly contrive.

The Avesford party had returned to the Priory, and Ravensworth, having arranged with General Dunbar to afford him his assistance on this momentous occasion, retired to his apartment in a state of very agitated feelings; but not from any apprehension of danger — let not his trepidation be mistaken for fear — for he possessed that courage, which, in all forgetfulness of self, feels for the honour of others. He was elevated by the powerful excitement, that if he fell, he died in the cause of one who was “dear as the ruddy drops”—which might never more “visit his sad heart.” Called to proper sense of the critical situation in which he stood, he now devoted his time to addressing a letter to his father, and one to Constance; he sealed and directed the latter, his soul as overwhelmed, and a deep gloom was cast

over his feelings. "Perhaps we may meet again! God bless thee!" he faltered: he knelt, and there, in the pell-mell of his thoughts and the out-pouring heart, he remained until the deep-tinted hour of five tired then for a few hours' rest. The be it ever so downy, is restless to of the duellist; and the dawn, the shuddering light that flakes the earth finds the extended form with closed eyes.

The small varnish-scented room, where the circulating library and toy-shop of town, has been from time out of grand emporium for all the gossip of the foreign and domestic; principally latter. To the fancy repository, the Misses Prettiman, in the Exchange of Rathborough, we must now intrude: — time, as the Plays say o'clock!" the morning after the Big dinner. The *dram. pers.* are, Miss

Miss Sibella and Miss Diana Prettiman. The scene of action was a small sanctum, divided by a curtain from the shop, and at the window of which it was the custom of one of the graces, as they were called, to take their station, and report all that passed in this fashionable promenade.

"O Sibella!" exclaimed *Painée*, who was posted at the window, "I wonder what is going on at the Doctor's; no less than three notes from his house, and Captain Manley's orderly still waiting for an answer."

"Why, I should not wonder if there was a rumpus; the Doctor drank tea last evening at the Priory, and the milkwoman told our Anne that she had heard from the gardener, that high words had passed between him and Mr. Ravensworth."

"Lor' a muss !" screeched the chaste goddess Diana, "what a pity ! Mr. Ravensworth is such a nice man ! such a picturesque man ! so, somehow, the very moral of Lucy Ash-

ton's lover in the Bride of Lammermoor as was lost in the Goodwin Sands, a feather."

"Quite the gentleman!" echoed bella. "So handsome!—gave me t and took four tickets yesterday in o loo for the beautiful hand-screens. Lavinia, I declare there's the doctor turning with a long, flat square backgammon board, only more dark without the squares."

"Oh, mi!—my goodness! !—what thought !!!" escaped the sisters the same moment. "Well, I should not be surprised if it was about Lady Atherley's boy, when he brought Lavinia's draughts the pitched plaster for cook, said he from the laundry-maid that went to the to have a tooth taken out, that there was in the case. The servants' hall people ed Miss Diana, "at the Priory were

"Lady Atherley, depend upon i

flame of Mr. Ravensworth's — so brother says, who heard it from Monsieur La Fleur, Captain Priddie's gentleman, when he was a *coiffeing* him yesterday."

"Oh, that sweet Lady Atherley!" said the sentimental Diana. "What a bewitching creature!"

"Quite the lady," replied Sibella; "wears a white swan's down muff and tippet, like the Queen; filled our raffle yesterday for the ivory card-case—." At this moment the conference was put an end to by the entrance of Mr. Prettiman, perruquier and hair-dresser to the residents and gentry of the town of Ratborough and the neighbourhood.

"Oh, Julius, here's a to-do!" said the sisters in unison. "Dr. Boyle, Mr. Ravensworth, Lady Atherley!—duel!—pretty piece of work at the Priory! But what did Mr. La Fleur say?"

At this the *Barbière* recapitulated all the *cancan*s of the steward's room, and terminated the congress by the assurance that, in

the course of his morning's cuttings, and curlings, he would come at the r We leave him to his peregrinations, to the belligerent Doctor.

When the "morn and cool reflect he began to think that, in America logy, he had made a pretty consid darning particular fool of himself; i however, too late to retract, and hi turned upon how he could best the scrape. Some little slur had former occasion, thrown upon the D rage, in having allowed to pass u insult that had been offered him meeting of the subscribers to the I hospital. The Doctor had been ope of jobbing; and the individual w forward the charge accompanied it mark, that such conduct was disg unworthy that of a gentleman.

"Do you mean to say, sir, that is disgraceful?" blustered forth the

"Sir ! I say that such conduct *is* disgraceful
of a man."

"Oh !" quickly interrupted the M.D., "if
you could say *that* of any man, the remark is
true, and I cannot apply it personally."

"Lais revenons à nos moutons." Publicity,
which the legal authorities of the peaceful
village would be called upon to interfere, was
the Doctor's best chance. A letter then was
addressed to Mr. Counsellor Wheezle, who had
replied to a hostile message by the peace-
, as it is better described, "civil" process
of criminal information, and to whom the
Doctor looked for the realisation of the saying,
"A hollow-feeling makes us wondrous kind," re-
questing the loan of his pistols, and urging him
to strictest silence, for fear of magisterial
interference. In order, also, that all the coun-
selor's establishment might be aware of the se-
ssion, he requested his servant would
bring a case of duelling pistols.

Counsellor Wheezle being from home at a

turnpike meeting, Mrs. Wheezle, without offering the note, sent the pistols, little dreading they had never been used "after deserts"; of the mischief they were intended. Armed, then, with a neat mahogany eighteen inches long, three deep, and six broad, containing the warlike weapons, i hand, and the okskin basket in the other (the Doctor dispensed medicine,) did the "cart's boy" perambulate the High-street Rutherford. On reaching his master's he found him impatient for his return.

"Well! well! what answer?"

"Please, sir. Mr. Counsellor Wheezle at home; but his missus sent this case. I sent Mr. Bryan's to borrow the brown for the chay; sorry to say he's *in bed* (the boy had always been told never to drugs physic,) so I ordered the fly for Chequers."

The third note which had attracted the attention of the demoiselles of the temple

on was to Surgeon Aykbone, requesting to be in readiness at five o'clock at the ~~h~~ and Horses, near Cottesmore Heath, to be prepared with lint, sticking-plaster, ~~u~~ges, probes, bullet forceps, tourniquets, ~~t~~ating knives, saws, and any other useful things that might be requisite ~~se~~ a gentleman should require surgical ~~an~~ emergency. The Doctor prescribed himself the following draught, which we recommend to timid gentlemen placed in ~~r~~ situations:—

R Aquæ bulliantis $\frac{3}{4}$ iii.
Sacchari albi $\frac{3}{4}$ ii.
Succi limonis oz. i.
Aqua forte *potsheeni* $\frac{3}{4}$ vi.
isce. Fiat haustus statim sumendus.

Notwithstanding this exhilarating draught taken in the most liberal construction of st direction, *statim sumendus*, that is at a the hours passed tediously on, and the s were as difficult to be administered to

as was the "diseased mind" of M
better half, at the period she became
ambulist.

The Doctor, attributing the conse
lence to that caution which always
terised the learned recorder, and feel
vinced that he would lose no time in
information to the proper authoritie
his valour rising slowly to "set fair."
mediately penned a note to Captain M
most gallant officer of the marines,
had served with honour, and had even
himself "in utrumque paratus," and
lost his arm in that gallant action
Exmouth brought to reason a fero
vernment, and destroyed for ever the
able and horrid system of Christian
Captain Manley at once acceded to the
request, of being his friend upon the
still expressing a hope that matters
amicably arranged, and intimating
begged the Doctor would lose no

coming to his house, to prevent the possibility of any interference. A note was forwarded to General Dunbar; five o'clock was the hour named, and the spot a retired dingle, near Cotesmere Heath. The very name of the place appointed for the meeting had a hostile sound in the ears of the Doctor, and his heart retired more within itself. It was a glorious evening—the day had been hot and oppressive, “the insect world were on the wing,” and the air was swarming with the happy and varied sounds of life.

The heavens were smiling, the sky was bright and beautiful, one pile of gorgeous clouds was tinged with the glories of the setting sun, and the flowers of spring were in their richest bloom, as the General and Ravensworth left the priory.

“ It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity.”

Stopping at a small public-house, the General, taking the pistols from the carriage, led Dudley through a few lonely fields to one protected from observation by the sudden rising of a high wooded bank. It was thickly clothed with copsewood; beneath them stretched the rich cultivated lands of Avesford, full of tall trees, hedge-rows, masses of planting, smiling uplands, all in their freshest verdure. Herds of deer were reposing in the sheltered valley. The place was at present solitary, which, though so little distant from the busy hum of men, had a wonderful air of romantic, settled, and holy stillness; the inexplicable stillness of evening! Who, in contemplating the tranquillity of the landscape, could conceive it to be one selected for a deed of blood? Again, what silence and harmony reign; no sounds strike on the ear: what a contrast to the turbulent scenes of a great city, overgrown with wealth, luxury, misery, and folly! How mingled were the feelings

that found way to Dudley's heart, as he calmly waited the moment of his fate: he felt that, without Constance, life was to him a blank; then, the pride of sacrificing all for her, who, though she had dashed the cup of happiness from his lips, was the only object that bound him to existence.

But he had little time to commune with his feelings,—for in a few moments his reverie was disturbed by the approach of the parties. A distant bow of recognition took place,—the General, as Dudley's friend, proposed, as an accommodation, that an ample apology might still put an end to so unpleasant a business. Manley, whose “courage was as keen, but at the same time as polished as his sword,” saw the impracticability of such a proceeding, under the circumstance of a hand having been raised against his friend,—which in all honourable codes is tantamount to a blow. The ground was then measured,—at this momentous crisis the Doctor felt “his valour oozing out at the palms

of his hands; " in vain like Fatima dear," he strained his eyes, but could galloping" to his rescue. The pi given to the parties; it would be to describe the varieties of expressi contortions that the physiognomy of underwent,—

" For men will tremble or turn pale
With too much or too little valour

Without any great skill in the sci water, no one could have inclined to former predominated. The seconds word was given, both fired, the sm peared, and each was standing in attitude. Captain Manley now steppe and proposed to the General that worth would make an apology for hi the Doctor was willing to receive it worth replied through his second, never would apologise for performir considered was the duty of every ma

tection of woman from insult; the offence had emanated from the Doctor, and nothing less than an ample apology would be satisfactory to his feelings."

"Then, gentlemen, we must proceed," said the Captain. The Doctor shook from head to foot, and whispered something to his second, which only received for reply—

"Impossible,—we must go on."

The pistols were again loaded, and in a state of nervous trepidation the Doctor set the hair trigger. Ere the words "Are you ready, gentlemen?" had been uttered, the Doctor touched by accident the trigger, the pistol went off, the ball grazing and slightly wounding his own foot; down sprawled the son of Galen, exclaiming, "I'm shot,—wounded,—desperately wounded,—I'm a dead man,—I'm—." Ravensworth firing his pistol in the air, now came forward and offered every assistance in his power. Surgeon Aykbone, who had heard the reports from a spot so conveniently situated

that he could not see what was passing,—immediately came forward. The wound was pronounced slight, and, peace being proclaimed, the parties returned home. The Doctor was consoled at his wound by the thought of the *éclat* the affair would make; one drawback alone he felt, and which he trusted to his *fidus Achates*: “only think! the fly will cost one pound one!”

CHAPTER V.

HOAXING.

"Jokes are like sky-rockets, which though they are meant only to amuse, yet are often, according to the place or object on which they light, the cause of mischief and of pain, if not of destruction."

MRS. OPIE.

—“Nimis uncis
Naribus indulges” —

PERS. SAT. I. 40.

“You drive the jest too far.”

DRYDEN.

IT is not to be supposed that in the gossiping town of Ratborough, where a trifling matter always created a great stir, so important an event as the one recorded in the preceding

chapter, could be regarded with indifference. It soon became the prevailing topic; the fair was in every one's mouth, and afforded most exquisite *morceau* for all the scandalmongers, and the "Ratborough Journal." Dredley was pronounced to be the "most handsome, most polite, most bravest young man in the whole universal world." The Doctor, who had become the laughing-stock of the town,—drove quietly up and down the High-street looking most thoughtful,—his foot bandaged up, and trying to create a sympathy.

"Oh la! what a man of consequence the Doctor looks to-day." "Well I'm sure, the Doctor does look as if the King had sent for him, and he could 'nt go." "Dear me, now, doesn't he look consequential?" exclaimed the Prettimans; in short, all the idlers, gossips, and titupping misses, talked of nothing else but the spirited conduct of the parties; and it would be endless to notice the additions and editions,

corrected and revised of “*the affair*,” as it was, *par excellence*, called, during the three glorious days through which the wonderment lived. The country press slyly hinted at senatorial Giovannis and passionate physicians ; and dog-grel, lampoons, pasquinades, and caricatures kept irritatingly alive the unfortunate story, until our pugnacious Doctor found that he was becoming the object of universal derision.

Unfortunately for the medical gentleman, two squadrons of hussars occupied some small wooden buildings, about a mile from the town, looking like children’s Noah’s arks, but which were called the barracks, and these held more than two of a kind. Among the officers were two young wild, rattling, roaring roystering cornets, (Charles Cyril and Tom Fauconberg by name,) just emancipated from Eton. They were always ready with a practical joke ; and, on account of certain eccentric propensities, were dignified with the enviable cognomens of the *Hoaxer* and the *Slasher*. Cicero has observed

that a jest is never uttered with a better grace than when it is accompanied by a serious countenance; and this Charles Cyril possessed to an eminent degree. The cornets were spoken of in the regiment as "good fellows," though a little wild, with rather too high a flow of spirits." So good an object as the Ratborough Galen could not fail to attract the attention of the Hoaxter, who, on hearing of the duel, immediately set his wits to work, and, as they were most prolific, on the same night the results were put in execution.

A little after 12 o'clock, a mounted party sallied forth from the barracks, headed by the Hoaxter, disguised as a country servant. On entering the High-street, his comrades separated, leaving him to enact the principal rôle of the evening's performance. In a few minutes, a loud ringing was heard at the Doctor's door.

"Who's there?" exclaimed a shrill female voice, from the attic.

tor Boyle! Doctor Boyle is wanted!"
the Cornet, assuming the Somerset-
elect.

"Doctor is not very well, and has given
out to be disturbed," responded the
nurse.

"General Dunbar has been overturned; —
sprained his arm, sprained his wrist, and frac-
tured his skull. It's a case of life and death,
I say!" said the Hoaxer, who during
the conversation kept continually ringing the

doctor, who had only just retired, and
said it might only be the application
of a poultice to a poor patient, had hitherto turned a
deaf ear to the entreaties; the moment the
General Dunbar was mentioned, he
put on his dressing-gown and slippers,
opened his bed-room window, told the
nurse to wait, and he would dress and

"I am very glad to see you. Mayhap, sir,

you h'ain't a-heard the news. Poo Dunbar! No time for dressing, zi can't come now, I mun go to one I've a chay ready."

"One moment, young man."

"Not one, zir!"

The Doctor descended hastily. concerted signal, a chaise which h waiting now drove up to the door.

"I really can't go this figure! Doctor, eyeing the scraggy house with her apron over her face, was candle, and calling for Jeemes to case of instruments.

"Postboy, drive to Doctor H: said the Cornet, getting into the ca self, and declaring it would be a his place was worth to wait any lo Doctor hesitated, and, like many o sex that have deliberated, was lost. ed the carriage.

"Make the best of your way," shouted the Hoaxer. "Pay back!"

The whole of this affair had taken much less time to execute than we have taken to narrate it. When the Doctor began to collect his scattered ideas, he commenced numberless inquiries as to the nature of the accident. To all of these, the Hoaxer either replied unintelligibly, through the fog of a thick handkerchief, or in sounds dextrously compounded of sigh, groan, and snore, in equal quantities. The chaise rattled on, over a very rough road, and nothing but the idea of a rich compound fracture soothed the agitated spirits of the half-dressed, wholly-shaken, dismal, shivering member of the College of Physicians.

On reaching a small public-house the Hoaxer ordered the postboy to stop. Getting out of the carriage, he requested the Doctor to follow him; and, no sooner had the medical victim descended from the vehicle and stood quivering

in the road. A midnight He-Masidora, the Carrier, stepped in, and shut the door.

"Home!" cried he to the postboy, general or nothing! " At the irresistible command the postboy's ears were shot. "The best of your way, stop at the beast-in-Coff whistled the chaise at the rate of miles an hour, leaving the wretched carrier, in his almost primitive attire, five miles from the dark, dull, and slumbering town of Rutherford.

In less than five and twenty minutes the Carrier had landed in a bye street n^o Seven Inn; a few moments sufficed to him to exchange his habiliments; and half past one o'clock was being cried by watchful guardians of the night, Charley dashed into a room at the Wheatsheaf, in hand, exclaiming—

" Well, I've won by half a minute! I turned out, and ran to ground the old man in something under the hour!" The

to whom this was addressed consisted of the officers we have previously alluded to, seated round a large table, on which was being placed the inn's best supper : this consisted of deviled turkey's remnants, grilled bones, lobster salads, anchovy toast, Welch rabbits, iced champagne, tarragon punch, and a huge bowl of bishop.

"Bravo, Cyril!" exclaimed half a dozen voices at the same time. "Here, old fellow ! here's your twenty pounds ! you richly deserve them."

"Hang the money!" replied the Hoaxer. "Let it go towards the supper ; we'll drink the old boy's health, and many happy returns of the night in bumpers of champagne. Waiter ! waiter, attention ;—draw corks ! when I says draw I doesn't mean draw,—but when I says *corks*, let me see them there corks fly briskly out of the bottles ; that's right, let it be done in a soldier-like, or rather, waiter-like manner !"

We will leave the officers to enjoy their

supper, where song and sillery, mirth and laughter prevailed, and return to the unfortunate object of the night's adventure, who found himself, at "past one o'clock and a cloudy morning," quaking in his linen dressing-gown at the door of a small public-house. After rapping ineffectually for some minutes, he proceeded through a small yard to the back entrance; the noise of a chain dragging over a wooden edge, and a low, savage growling of a watch-dog, followed by a loud fierce bark, warned him not to intrude farther, as he might elect himself into an unpleasant zoological society. Summoning courage, he returned to his first point of attack, and with a log of wood gave a knock worthy of the most high-bred, powder-headed, pampered London footman.

"Who's there?" inquired a voice from a small window, "speak, or I'll fire! you've frightened my wife out of her three senses!" and suiting the action to the word, thrust a

large, broad brass blunderbuss, very like a well kept trumpet, out of the window.

"An accident has happened," rejoined the Doctor.

"Come away, Matthew ; don't stand talking to those trampers," exclaimed a dissatisfied female voice within.

Mr. Matthew Hodges' better half was all on the moan. " Mathew, I say, come away this minute; don't let them in, you know how they stole all our best pewter pots last week."

"Coming, my dear," said the husband.

"I warrant he's one of the gang. Come, shut the window, or I shall catch my death of cold," said the tender-hearted hostess.

The husband, as all husbands are bound to do, was *about* to obey his wife's mandate, when the Doctor throwing all his energies into what now appeared a forlorn hope, exclaimed, — "I'm Doctor Boyle of Ratborough, called to attend General Dunbar, who has met with an

over the
daylight

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fatigues of the night soon procured the
cal man a most excellent sleep, and at an
hour the ostler was despatched for his
es, and horse, and before ten o'clock our
y M.D., mounted on his *charger*, (for so a
r's Rozinante may well be styled,) entered
own of Rathborough.

The party we left at the Wheatsheaf did ample
re to "mine host's supper." They were a set
reless souls, choice spirits, "fellows of infi-
est and merriment," and after laying in a
tum sufficit of that stimulus to drink, vul-
called "a devil," the *convives* began to
off flashes of merriment: some retailed
jokes and pilfered witticisms, the glass
ated freely, the catch and glee went round,
Hoaxer set the table literally in a *roar*,
before three o'clock the gallant officers
(to use the phrase applied to fashionable
iety) "rather elated, a little the worse for
" The bill was called for (breakages did
orm the smallest items) and settled; and

the party beat a retreat towards the barn. Yet the demon of mischief seemed to possess the mind of the Hoaxer, for, on passing Doctor's house, a large red and green lantern吸引了 his attention. "Why, who am I this?" hiccupped out Charley Cyril, ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΠΩΛΗΤΗΡΙΟΝ" — the Phar-macopœia — for such was the classical name of the well-be-thought erudite M.D. had given to his laboratory—it being blazoned forth in characters, though the Doctor knew as much of the Greek language as the shadow of the Latin tongue, when after a word or two with his rival neighbour of the shop he outdid his brother Herod in their evening announcements, as follow—"the cheapest shop in England, the cheapest shop in the world, selling off at prime cost, selling under prime cost;" he outdid his brother Herod in his motto of—

"Crasca mens recti famæ mendacia ridet,"

by adding—

"Conscia mens and women's recti," &c., &c.

"A head too, Ga—Galen's, ' throw physic to the dogs' ;"—a missile accompanied this quotation, which entirely demolished the coloured bottles of indigo and cochineal;—"oh, unworthy son of Esculapius ! come, Slasher, here's a lark, —give me a lift ;" mounting on his brother Comet's shoulders the head was speedily decapitated; "but we must not leave the Pharmacopoleterion without any sign, there's one two doors off that will just suit ; lend us a hand." In a few moments a board with "funerals performed" had replaced the Galen's head: "Holloa, what's this ? — Zimmerman, Pawnbroker,—Money lent,—three balls,—two to one against you,—let 's draw the Jew !"

"Leave him alone," cried Fauconberg ; "leave Zimmerman in his *solitude*."

"Well, we 'll leave him a *loan*, which is more than he'd do towards us."

But we will not stop to enumerate similar frolics that took place on this memorable morning ; suffice it to say, that of lamps broken, signs displaced, &c. "absent without leave," was considerable. Great was the consternation, many were the miseries among the worthy burghers of the town of Ratborough, as to the culprit. Once public rumour was right,—and the men of H. M. —— Hussars were strongly suspected. A small knot of the greatest scoundrels had assembled near the corn-market, to which the Doctor (hitherto unconscious of his own decapitation of his own laboratory), was passing.

"Good morning, Doctor!" exclaimed Spicer the grocer, whose sugar-loaves had been replaced by three golden balls from the neighbouring pawnbroker's.

"Morning, gentlemen; any news in the borough?"

"An event *has* occurred, Doctor, but you may have heard a rumour."

"Indeed, no! I was sent for *professionally* last night out of town (here the Doctor shook a little), and am only just returned;—*we* medical men—" and here the worthy practitioner would have entered into a lengthy detail of the disinterestedness of his conduct in sacrificing every consideration for the public good,—when Mr. Feltam the hatter, a tall, pompous, portly, awe-striking man,—his eye flashing fire, joined the coterie.

"Well, since I've known this borough, never was there a greater infringement on the rights and liberties of the subjects." (Mr. Feltam was vice-president of the Ratborough reform association, and a bit of an orator.) "Is it not enough to be called upon to support a standing army,—are not the hard earnings of the working classes, gained by the sweat of their brow, wrung from them to pay this useless force?"

"Bless my soul, Mr. Feltam, what has

occurred?" interrupted Doctor Boyle, smarting under the reminiscences of the previous night's adventure.

"What *has* occurred, Doctor! have you not yet been home?" Here the medical man's imagination ran most vividly abroad.

"Not burned down my house, I hope,—not arson?"

"Felony, felony!" cried Mr. Spicer.

"Come, gentlemen, let us talk this matter over, let us call a public meeting, let us show the authorities, that we, the respectable housekeepers, are not to be trampled upon by the iron heel of the proud aristocratic popinjays;" exclaimed Mr. Feltam, pointing to his own shop; "felony! they've broken open my warehouse door, and stolen my sign, my hat, my large *red tin hat*; the 'only original hat!'" During this conversation the enraged party were proceeding rapidly towards the High-street; at the door of the Doctor's house a crowd of ragged urchins had assembled.

When the poor practitioner saw the havock, he looked like Marius at Carthage “ a remnant of life amid a city of ruin !” the wires of the night-bell had been cut, and the handle hung dangling like a broken limb at the door; the knocker had been wrenched off, the Galen’s head had been carried off, the party-coloured lamp was broken off—(to shivers) ; the offensive board from the undertaker’s was, in the Doctor’s eyes, the unkindest cut of all ! “ A joke’s a joke ! and even practical jests are very capital in their way, if you can only get the other party to see the fun of them.” So says one who is no mean authority on these matters : but as the worthy burghers of Rathborough were so dull of comprehension, as to be quite lost to a sense of the drollery of the previous night’s proceedings,—they took up the affair seriously, and after much deliberation, it was finally arranged that Doctor Boyle, with his friend Counsellor Wheezle, should call at the barracks and try and ascertain the truth of the reports.

On reaching their destination they ~~were~~ most cordially received by the officers, ~~and~~ pressed to remain for luncheon: the ~~wary~~ counsellor put a few indirect questions, ~~but~~ all they elucidated was an expression of anger and commiseration from the senior officer,—who was perfectly ignorant of the real parties,—at the disgraceful outrage that had been committed upon the peaceful inhabitants of Ratborough. Luncheon was announced; both the Doctor and the counsellor promptly seemed to forget their grievances, in a bumper of Maraschino. These worthy citizens drank the healths of “the gallant corps, whose lion-like conduct in the field was only to be equalled by their lamb-like conduct at home;” a few significant looks were exchanged,—the Hoaxer being orderly officer, was now called to stables,—on passing one, he espied two raw-boned splashed animals surprised with corn.

“Sergeant Priestly, whose horses are those? what business have they in the troop stables?”

"Please sir," replied the smart sergeant,
"they belong to the gentlemen in the mess-
room."

"Very well,—in future let them be put in
an officer's empty stable." The Cornet with
an evident hankering after the Doctor's pro-
perty, returned to the stable; a thought
seemed at once to strike him, and after hurry-
ing into his room he shortly returned with a
small phial; in a second the contents of it
were dropped upon the hind legs of the two
steeds, and then with a face that would have
made any old lady exclaim, "that she doubted
whether butter would melt in his mouth," he
re-entered the mess-room.

The Doctor was loudly holding forth upon
the merits of the army; and after thanking
his kind hosts for their polite attention, (for
the object of the mission was lost in the Maras-
chino,) the horses were ordered round, and
the party were wished a very pleasant ride
home. On preparing to mount, the Doctor

seemed rather surprised at some half dozen curs, who set up the most discordant yelling, growling and barking.

The Counsellor thinking discretion the better part of valour, remained on terra firma; the Doctor's horse now sprang forward, shook himself, backed, kicked, and went through a series of curvets and carakoels.

"Confound the brute!" said the Doctor.

"Playful creature," exclaimed the Cornet, watching the proceedings; "regular bit of blood!"

Seizing the pommel with an agility that surprised the spectators, the Doctor sprang into the saddle,—off started the animal,—head in the air, giving a sharp kick, whenever the application of the rider's spurs was more than usually effective. The yelling increased.

"Back, back curs!" cried the Slasher, cracking a hunting-whip, and thereby frightening the steed prodigiously. "Now sir, as our riding-master says; — let me see them there

paces done in a regeular and distinct manner,— walk steady and h'easy,— trot strong and h'active,— canter light and h'airy,— charge h'ani-mated vigorous, but not violent,— hold tight, catch firm grip hold of the mane."

The Doctor, attending to this advice, held fast by the mane and clung by his legs, his spurs, in the most approved St. John Long fashion, producing the counter-irritation to his horse's neck. Another crack of the whip, and off scampered the Doctor's horse—Johnny Gilpin of Edmonton renown was a joke to him ! just as he crossed the barrack-yard, the door of an out-house was opened, and about four couple of drag-hounds—the red-herring pack as they were called — were unkennelled, the Doctor's horse increased his pace, and away he went down the steep hill towards Ratborough.

As a snow-ball gathers by rolling, so did the pack increase at every step; a butcher's boy on horseback joined the chase,— and with two fingers in his mouth "whistled as he

THE
SILENT STORM.

Well, I have some news for you now as you want to know.

" Do you mind . . . when did you leave your home?" asked one of the two men.

" Very late; you see it was dark & I had to walk."

" Very well," screamed a third.

" Do you think your horse bolted?" shouted a fourth.

" Only—no," roared a fifth, while numerous voices immediately began to ask whether his mother was aware of his absence, or in communication. " Whether his mother knew he was out?"

Fortunately the poor hunted friend is a cross-country boy, and as he approached the village a drove of oxen and a flock of sheep came to dispute the road with him; the herdsmen seemed to the league to drive him—they ran at him, following up with voluntary energy. Then, as he heard the yelping and barking of the dogs

— the loud oaths and cries of the drover,— the bleating of the sheep,— filled up the dismal chorus; — and now the gates of a straw-yard spread invitingly open; — the Doctor gave his horse a sudden jerk, turned him into the yard, but in the great exertion pitched over his head, and came broadside into some stubble; that accomplishment produced evident signs that pigs had passed some portion of their leisure time there. The hounds, coming to a check, threw up their heads, and consoled themselves by worrying a sheep. The Doctor in the mean time, like Sir W. Blunt on his return from Holmedon,

“ New lighted from his horse,
Stained with the variation of each soil,”

felt himself (to use a phrase of Jonathan’s,) “ most teetocasionally exflunctified; ” he skulked through the back streets to his own residence, a disconcerted deputation in himself, and there for the present we take leave to deposit him. Counsellor Wheezle’s officiousness was not left

unpunished ; the following day there were ~~no~~ less than three hundred letters put in the post, directing tradesmen and others to send or come to Counsellor Wheezle's at three o'clock, precisely. At that hour it were impossible to recount the business of the “flux of company” that knocked at the door or crowded the entrance. Here was the tallow-chandler with six dozen pounds of moulds and four of kitchen,— there a waggon load of coals, a patent mangle, a cart-load of Dutch tiles; next came the landlords of the Swan, Wheat-sheaf, and Fleece, to take orders for dinners and suppers ;— three pair of post-horses,— two one-horse flies, the owner of a travelling show— to treat for the purchase of a young rhinoceros, and then a patent iron coffin to receive the body of the dead counsellor; two tailors next appeared, half a dozen boot-makers,— one glass-coach,— four chaises ;— at last a hearse drove up; a gentleman called in consequence of a challenge received from the coun-

sellor. Servants out of place of all kinds appeared,—tradesmen with fish, fowl, flesh,—confectionary, wine, beer — all attended. Two men came with a huge looking-glass, and a van containing tables and chairs and long cane rout seats; one led up a young colt; a boy brought three gross of tobacco-pipes ; and the strolling company came for a bespeak.

There is a certain point to which forbearance may go, but there is also a certain point at which it will stop. When the Ratborough Halford awoke in the morning, and thought over the events of the preceding day, and, moreover found himself considerably bruised by his fall, he fell to considering what course he could adopt to rescue himself and his townsmen from any more nocturnal attacks. Were confirmation required as to the parties implicated in the late transactions in the borough, he thought the event of the previous day at the barracks was sufficient evidence ; and he declared his intention of treating the affair se-

tinously, by addressing the commander-in-chief; but before his beautiful passion could in any way bubble over, a circumstance occurred which entirely threw the whole affair into the back-ground.

A political jobber (Mr. Ledbeter) who commanded some half-dozen votes, had proposed to the worthy mayor and corporation the trial of a new stove, invented by himself; at which, to use his own phrase, was to combine "elegance, utility, and economy." A trial was granted; but unfortunately the old-fashioned servants, who had been for nearly half a century fixtures at the town-hall, reprobed the introduction of any new-fangled invention, and left the stove to take care of itself.

Early in the morning, the housekeeper stated, as it afterwards came out in evidence, that she had remarked a strong smell of burning, and had complained of the immense heat that had pervaded the whole building; she had mentioned it to her husband, who had no

tioned it to the porter, who had mentioned it to the town-crier, who had mentioned it to no one.

About eight o'clock the town clerk, having occasion to get some papers for the worshipful magistrate's signature, entered the hall, and was immediately sensible of a decided presence of subdued fire. Thoroughly alarmed, he instantly aroused all the servants and neighbours : *of course* the keys of the engine-houses, "kept at Mr. Smith's," could not be found ; the ladders were being re-stepped, and the water-pipes were out of repair. In less than half an hour the flames had communicated to the left wing, a small building in which all the records of the borough were kept,—municipal documents, papers of inestimable (rural) value, and the loss of which could never be repaired.

During this time several engines arrived, and began to ascertain their various states of decay. The news spread like wild-fire ; it reached the barracks, and before nine o'clock

the whole of the squadrons of the -
sars were on the spot.

The conflagration raged with unabat
nothing could exceed the praisewo
daring conduct of the military ; a s
under the command of the Adelph
the Slasher and Charles Cyril, we
cut off while doing duty on one of
of the building, and in which were
those valuable records of the borou
portion of the intermediate building
the poor fellows were left in a
arious situation, completely surro
flames, and hoaxing appeared on
of losing one of its brightest orname
sently their perilous condition was
and a fire-ladder (which happily l
steps at irregular intervals) being rea
the side of the building, the parties
by means of it. The last to deser
two officers in question, bearing wi
iron box. Immediately afterwards

building was in one raging flame; as many men as could be spared from the military, were kept parading up and down the streets during the day, to check any depredations or outrages, and to assist in removing all the valuable documents and property that were saved from the building.

Throughout the morning the fire continued to burn with great fury, but the engines, (having put in to wood and water,) played late in the day, and, being then kept constantly at work, they at last subdued the fire, and, in a few hours, the far-famed town-hall of Rotherham presented a lamentable spectacle of blackened and smoking ruins. At four o'clock the military and constables, who had been on duty from the commencement of the conflagration, were relieved.

At a public meeting of the inhabitants,—for a calamitous corporation events there is nothing breathes the general heart so effectively a fat gentleman in a large chair, with one

at two o'clock in the morning. Then it was resolved unanimously that the thanks of the may importance of the soldiers and loyalty of Buxton ought be given to the officers of the —— Hussars for the zealous services rendered by them on the occasion last mentioned for at the town-hall a report be forwarded to His Royal High the Duke of York, commander-in-chief expressing the high satisfaction the civil authorities had in the soldier-like conduct of the troops in their exertions to arrest the progress of the flames and to preserve the safety of the inhabitants. The meeting followed by a public dinner, at which one of the borough was presented to the Queen. Every honour was paid to the Queen who was a undeserved, for a finer, braver set of men than the —— Hussars, never seen. In Spain, Portugal, and at Waterloo had covered themselves with glory, &

by that heart of oak, manly, English indomitable courage, for which our soldiers are distinguished, but by that higher and more chivalrous species of valour, which is mental rather than personal, and which follows calmly and feelingly in the paths of duty, amidst the most appalling dangers, fully realising that character of the British soldier so ably described by Napier, "who endures with surprising fortitude the worst of ills, sustains the most terrible assaults in battle unmoved, and, at all times, proves that, while no physical military qualification is wanting, the fount of honour is full and fresh within him."

A return dinner was, of course, given at the barracks, to which the civil authorities and the leading people of Ratborough were invited, and, of course, attended. Nothing could exceed the good humour that prevailed ; all were apparently in the highest state of cordiality and boon companionship ; every circumstance tended to mirthful jollity ; before

the cloth was removed they all felt friends, although many met for the first time. "The feast of reason" being over, the tables were cleared for "the flow of bowl." Wine circled round, good humour increased in many a merry jest and tale of by-gone days, and, as the vinous influence increased, the party became more clamorous.

"The night drove on wi' sangs and claps,

many an excellent story was told, a song was sung; all seemed drowsy, excepting in the chorus the favorite old bacchanalian hymn.

"The day is gone, the night's our own,
Then let us feast the soul;
If any pain or care remain,
We'll drown it in the bowl."

The Hoaxer trolled forth Byron's goblet again." It was a night of mirth and frolic; the hours fled so fast, that the party fairly broke through the windows, filling the

speaking, before the guests were aware of it. At length their worshipfuls rose to depart. The Doctor, nothing loth, was easily pressed to stay, under the promise of a lift home. There was a consciousness among the whole party that the worthy M.D. had been a little too severely treated in the late midnight revels, and an anxiety arose to redeem the past. A brilliant thought of the Slasher's brought about a consummation which all had devoutly wished.

"Doctor, that's a neat horse of yours :" the Doctor's face elongated with the remembrance of the trick played upon him. "What a capital buggy horse he would make: why don't you put him in harness ?"

"First catch your buggy, as Mrs. Glass would say. We country practitioners,—though, thank heaven, I have no reason to complain—"

"By the way," interrupted Tom Fauconberg, "that reminds me that Charley Cyril is

going to present you his jaunting car: do mention it, as he wishes to do it with an appropriate speech: ah, here he comes."

At this moment the Hoaxer re-entered room, and, wonderful to relate, had sent the mayor and corporation to their carriages without applying squibs and crackers to horses' tails, unbuckling the bridles, or tractring the lynch-pins.

" Charley, my boy," exclaimed the Slasher, " we have let out the secret: the Doctor at all would not hear of accepting your car; but you are so pressing—"

" *I* pressing! What jaunting-car?" stammered out the Cornet."

" Really, Captain Cyrill," said the Doctor, taking up the running fire, and giving the cornet brevet rank, " I do really feel highly flattered, and most profoundly grateful for your generous gift; but I fear I shall offend you."

" Rob!" replied the Slasher, " we are going to

to Ireland : taking a jaunting car there would be a regular case of coals to Newcastle ! ”

The Hoaxter, or rather, in this instance, the hoaxee, caught the idea, and delighted at an opportunity of wiping off all old scores with the Doctor, said,

“ Doctor, I insist—say no more. Gentlemen, Doctor Boyle’s health, and may he live long to enjoy all the good things of this world, and among them my jaunting-car.”

This toast, a bumper at parting, was received with cheers, nine times nine, and one cheer more for Boyle. Broiled bones, with their usual concomitants, were now produced ; an hour afterwards the Doctor was lifted into his fly, and departed ; but not till the officers had assured him that they should be happy at all times to see him in the same friendly manner, an invitation which, had the regiment remained in its then station, the Doctor would doubtless frequently have availed himself of.

“ Only fancy Doctor Boyle keeping his car-

riage," exclaimed all the ladies of the ~~fel~~^{ne} coteries at Ratborough, as he trotted down ~~the~~^{the} streets in his new jaunting-car.

"Oh, say not woman's heart is bought" is the burthen of a snatch, and far be it from us to doubt the assertion. Heaven forefend that we should say their hearts are influenced by mercenary motives; but painfully sure is it, that in less than six weeks, a maiden lady, rejoicing in the name of Quincey, who for years had declared, that having been brought up with extravagant ideas, she never could marry any man that did not afford her the luxury of a carriage, (and that therefore the Doctor must give up all hope of her,) had at last consented to take the worthy practitioner for better or worse, as the following paragraph in the county newspaper announced :

" Yesterday was married at St. Philip's Church, Doctor Boyle, M.D., to Miss Rachel

Quincey, sixth daughter of the late Captain Robert Quincey, Bombay Native Infantry."

In the words of our great novelist,—“ Prodigious ! ”

CHAPTER VI.

INTERVIEW—DUDLEY AND CONSTANCE.

“Amor puo molto piu che ne voi ne io possiamo.”

Beo

“The faults of love by love are justified.”

Du

DUDLEY and Constance were now thrown together. When she rode on horseback he was always her escort; in her walks and drives, he accompanied her. In the evening he was ever at her side, when she sang that voice low and sweet—“an excellent thing in woman,”—and in perfect taste, she recited the learned yet simple compositions of ancient masters. They read together S

Byron, Wordsworth, Campbell ; they applied poetry to their own emotions—often did he recite that sweet dirge of Byron's, " Fare thee well !" She listened to the truths of passion from the breath of poetry. Two months passed away in this pleasant but dangerous delirium. Constance was not unconscious of the influence she possessed over Dudley's mind ; but the result of it was so subdued and well controlled that she denied, even to herself, that under its shadow Love was crouching !

One evening, when Dudley had retired early from the dining-room, disgusted at the noisy mirth of the idly busy, thoughtless throng, "to brood in sorrow o'er his griefs," he entered the conservatory. The air, flower-fed, oppressed him. He hastily threw open the window, and stepped into the balcony which overlooked the lake. The moon had not yet risen ; it was the hour in which imagination seems to have the greatest power over us—

— “The hour is come,
When they that sail along the distant seas
Languish for home ; and they, that in the morn
Said to sweet friends “farewell !” melt as at part
When just gone forth, the pilgrim, if he hears
The bell that seems to mourn the dying day.
Slackens his pace and sighs, and those he loved
Loves more than ever !”

when the world is veiled by the man
the young night ; there, walking to and
for some moments, he wrestled with a
rebellious spirit against the unlawful
sion that vultured upon his heart. I
a lovely night; not a breath was sti
—The air, a chartered libertine, was stil
was a scene “ where all, save the spirit of
was divine ! ”

Wearied with the tumult of conte
thoughts. Dudley sank against the balus
the heaving of his chest—the gasping, as
breath—betrayed the fierce struggle with
breast ! So abstracted was he, that he w
aware of the approach of a footstep up

elt a hand gently touching his shoulder.
Turning round, he beheld Constance ! In a
dejected tone she addressed him :—

"I fear you are ill—nay, worse than you
would confess."

Dudley raised his head, and looked wildly at
her.

"It is in vain that I struggle," said he,
hurried into utterance by the scene, his passion,
and her presence. " You know not the sad
madness of my heart ; the agony of a broken
spirit ! despise me ! chide me ! spurn me !
Constance, I love you !"

She stood as one paralysed, but her whole
air, her very statue-like stillness told the tale.
So stood her namesake in the beautiful *statuary*
description of Scott in *Marmion* :—

"When thus her face was given to view,
(Although so pallid was her hue,
It did a ghastly contrast bear
To those bright ringlets glistering fair,)
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy.

And were she sick, so calm and pale,
Then but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted
That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax,
"Enough is the very life, was there,
So sick she was, so pale, so fair."

By an irresistible impulse Dudson held her hand, and raised it to his lips.

"Spare me!" she cried, now trembling.
"Spare me! think! think! think!
husband—let me not forget or be forg-

"Say that you—say that you—
hate me! say that you feel for me
my misery!"

He continued to retain her hand—
she begged him to leave her; and suddenly,
with a convulsive effort, she exclaimed
"Oh save me, save me!"

"Speak, I conjure you! say you
say only that you do not hate me—
only—"

Constance withdrew her hand. He paused, — but no reply. Her sobs showed the deep wretchedness of her heart.

"Beloved Constance!" said Dudley, with inexpressible tenderness, and bending at her feet.

"Rise, Mr. Ravensworth," replied Constance, her lip quivering;—"I beseech you to say no more; my heart is too full for words! I throw myself upon your clemency — your generosity! Indulge not in an erring passion, — deserve my regard, — my respect, — my affection, — my sisterly affection! — and, as you value *that*, breathe not another word!" She stood like one winged at once above her late tempest of the feelings, and was herself recovered!

Dudley stood appalled by her manner; at length, by a violent effort, he mastered himself; and with a deep but imploring voice, said, — "Forgive all that has caused you this! I will stifle, — I will subdue

my feelings ! Henceforth, acknowledge
only as a friend."

Clasping her hands, and repressing
tears the tears that would have
into her eyes, Constance exclaimed, ^{earnestness} — "I conjure you, for your
— for my sake, struggle against this fi-
end. May we both be forgiven ! I
ave my prayers, my best and purest wis-
heit, by your hopes in Heaven, swear
again — "

" Most solemnly do I swear !" interru-
Dudley. " You will then be my friend,
true friend, my adviser, my guide ? "

" I will. — I will !" faltered Con-
stance a relapsing tone. " And you will ad-
then to act rightly ? Strength will be g-
to us to submit to our worldly separation."

" May Heaven guide you !" replied
Dudley. " By nobly supporting yourself
will keep me from sinking."

" Go. — go, now !" said Constance.—]

ley saw the struggle of conflicting emotions, he felt that they both stood on the brink of an abyss.—He remembered his words, and, with a hurried step, rushed from the balcony.

At this moment the voice of Lord Atherley was heard at the window. Constance, pale and thoughtful, entered the conservatory. As she approached the drawing-room she felt that all eyes would be upon her; but, fortunately, Miss Sowerby, who called herself a *fanatica per la musica*,—and who certainly was thoroughly versed in all the theories of bars, minims, quavers, and crotchets—was at that moment “splitting the ears of the groundlings,” by executing a difficult sonata of Hummel’s on the piano-forte. The more the piece became intricate the more she hammered away at the keys, crossing her hands with wonderful dexterity,—her flying fingers running up the half-notes with most marvellous rapidity; un-

til, at last, a final crash pronounced
ivory rhapsody over !

" Dear Lady Atherley ! I must beg that
you will favour us with that most beautiful
song, ' In Infancy our hopes and fears.' "

Constance pleaded a cold,—the instrument
out of tune. During these apologies Miss
Sowerby was preparing for another " piece
of music."

Dudley now entered the drawing-room,
and, in the expectation of hearing Constance
sing, placed himself near the piano-forte.

" Oh, Mr. Ravensworth ! how inexpress-
ibly kind it would be if you would but
turn over the leaves of the music-book,"
said Miss Sowerby, in a most beseeching
manner; — then adding, in a softer tone,
" You know it requires such a good eye and
ear ! "

Ravensworth made a profound bow ; he
did not dare to look towards what he

most wished to see ; and, fixed to the piano-forte, he bore his martyrdom with becoming patience.

Lord Atherley, from time to time, cast a glance at Constance, then at Dudley ; evidently surprised at her absent and confused manner. Unable longer to endure this torture, and anxious to escape from further observation, she consented to play. Ravensworth brought her music-books, and they looked them over together.

"If you are very kind," said he, "you will play one of the quadrilles we danced last night ; let me enjoy them over again." Lady Atherley complied. "What pleasure it is to hear an air again, which has once made us happy !" Constance looked up for a moment, coloured slightly, and played something else. Lord Atherley approached her.

" You seem fatigued, my love, it 's getting late ; — as you don't eat supper, had you not

better retire?" She took a candle, and as passed the door Dudley's eyes met hers; nearly upset the music-stand.

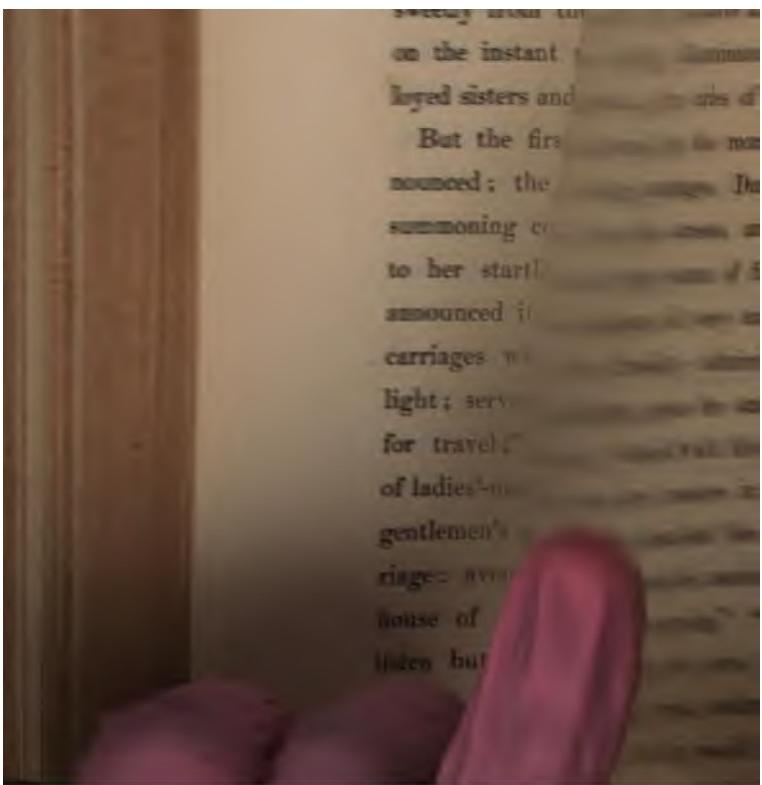
"O Mr. Ravensworth!" shrieked M Sowerby,—he turned again,—Constance gone! She retired to her room, and held communion with herself. What though the powerful passion was but in its youth of danger, knew the nature of that passion, and the constitution of the human heart too well, to hope for its death, while daily nourished by the presence of its object: and she already dreaded the fatal effects of its being permitted even to exist.

The society of Dudley had ever possessed for her the greatest charm; there was a similarity in their tastes; she had entered into his feelings,—she had loved him as a brother; now for the first time she was made conscious of the unbounded influence she had over his mind. The thought was madness! she shuddered when she looked back to the meshes that had

been woven to entangle her into her present fate; still she consoled herself at the idea that they were soon to separate,—and in the weakness of her reason, she trusted that in the giddy vortex of society forgetfulness might come to both. How little do the would-be-prudent know that love's first handmaid is memory!

The early spring wore away in drives, rides, excursions, fêtes,—April sobbed and cried itself out,—May came, and though the appointed period had now arrived for the dispersion of the Avesford party, the majority of General Dunbar's guests were too happily established to think of departure. There is no place where people know so much of each other, as in a country house; there the minds and dispositions of the party develop themselves freely and naturally. All restraint and coldness seem thrown off, and life appears charmed from its duplicities and disappointments. English women never appear so delightful as in a country house; the

swallow down the words
on the instant.
loyed sisters and
But the fir-
nounced; the
summoning c
to her start;
announced;
carriages w
light; serv
for travel;"
of ladies-m
gentlemen's
riage; even
house of
lived, but



CHAPTER VII.

LADY AATHERLEY IN LONDON.

Society is smoothed to that excess,
That manners hardly differ more than dress.
Professions, too, are no more to be found
Professional, and there is nought to cull
Of folly's fruit ; for though your fools abound,
They're barren, and not worth the pains to pull.
Society is now one polished horde,
Formed of two mighty tribes, the *Bores* and *Bored*.

BYRON.

THE summer, as Horace Walpole, that emperor of old china, says, "had set in with its usual severity," and it was now the height of the season. London was thronged with

the scenes of fashion and pleasure; Street was crowded with male and female, the squares and fashionable were brightly illuminated by the blinding lights; the cries of the watchmen were overpowered by the more powerful cry of passing carriages. Dudley was flung into the stream, and then whirled into the very vortex of fashion; then the numbers of envy and the grat of the friendly admired by those approximate gave the stamp of fashion "He is - adorned with faint praise"! nor were less masters in the circle have already described him as a tall young boy, nor had his manhood "unt the promise of his spring." "Avec les larmes arrosé par les yeux, avec les par les oreilles;" now, under either circumstance, Dudley would have been successful; for though not "the handsomest boy" he would have captivated the millin-

country town, his appearance was singularly prepossessing, and he interested the feelings of all by the thrilling tone of his voice, the penetrating glance or melancholy gaze of his eye, the sense that was stamped upon his features and was shown in his conversation. It may be easily imagined, that, with his natural gifts of mind and person, and with the advantages of good family, he was likely to be a man of note in any society. He possessed a figure tall and athletic, symmetrical and active; a manly and intelligent countenance, and was an Englishman in heart and soul. His attention was not easily or lightly to be attracted, or readily won; but once having fixed his regards he was firm, confiding, and incapable of change. His manners, too, had that peculiar felicity, that while they were full of cheerfulness and freedom they enjoyed the power of instantly suppressing the slightest trespass of offensive familiarity. With a happy turn of expression, Gibbon, in his Memoirs, has styled this

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COMPTON AUDLEY.

quality, not more valuable than credit or private dignity, "the invisible line, part of virtue and good sense;" or, to use his words, it is one

- This checks low mirth but lacks not count

It was this that Dudley won his way into the House of Commons, into a general popularity, though a determined supporter of legitimate and constitutional government. He was an enemy to abuses and a sincere friend to civil liberty; a zealous right: defender of the church; and firmly maintained the purity of its discipline against the errors of superstition, as he exerted himself to protect it from the calumnies of bigotry or the contagious intolerance. Nothing could be more full and inspiring than his strain of eloquence: his thoughts seemed to burn with words to burn: the clearness of his

tion, the acuteness of his reasoning,— the classical lore which he called to his aid in imagery, enlivened by an occasional brilliant snatch of wit,— his persuasive impressive tone, would have made many converts, were it not that members notoriously realise the passage in Hudibras,

“ He that complies against his will,
Is of his own opinion still.”

It was not long before a situation in the Treasury was offered to him; independently of his wish to be unfettered he had an innate horror of the official drudgery of pacing Whitehall, lighting a taper in Downing Street, and yawning over debates five nights out of seven, when called upon to make a house under the roof and the stifling atmosphere of St. Stephen's. His heart was ardent, liberal and benevolent; sincere and earnest in his friendships, and scorning disguise, he bared his faults as well as his virtues to every eye. His

THE DILETTOS ADDLEY.

The drama requirements gave him influence and influence in public affairs and integrity of principle gave a
to the influence.

But the month of heat and suns
and suds and dusty roads, was not
without its trials. All was dissipati-
on and sensuousness; a scene of racket from
till night — a perpetual hurry, a
rush. The world — the town was
running and crowding, as though
encouraging it itself to de-
struction. Society was "very much
Not a moment's leisure for reflection;
all was gaiety, feasting, music, dancing
or making love. The parks and
were thronged with carriages; the Op-
era, the park, gardens, dinner parties,
excursions to Richmond, and fêtes to
night — all the minnows done in lard,
shells per head; — all were ripe; the
days entered warmly into the dissipa-

the season. Every newspaper recorded the names of Lord and Lady Atherley as guests at the most illustrious tables, or as doing the honours of Grosvenor Square to the *élite* of the fashionable world. Lord Atherley enjoyed the evident admiration Lady Atherley excited ; nor was she ignorant of or unrelated by it. It is absurd to talk of the unconsciousness of admiration ; no handsome woman is, or can be unconscious of it ; no one can be indifferent to it. The satisfaction of finding that the impression she makes upon the world is a pleasing one,—that it cultivates a favourable prepossession, must be irresistibly gratifying, even to a mind untinged with vanity.

Lady Atherley soon became initiated into the lapsing hours of a London life ; her mornings were spent *selon les règles* of a fashionable lady's morning ; leaving cards, shopping, (that joy of joys,) and above all, driving about without an object, beyond Hookham and Mitchell's. To be sure, she has to enquire for the

last new novel, and latest waltz at Chappel
are her missions complete? — No, she has
receive in at the window of her carrying
bottle of perfume from Rigge's—a rib
from Redmayne's; to leave a *flacon* to
filled at Godfrey's,— a watch to be called
at Vieyres; — then follows a visit to the W
ern Exchange, prolonged into a drive thru
Bond Street, Pall Mall, Piccadilly and
James's Street; ending with the park. To
after a funereal pace in search of air thru
dust, “the wearied heart is *driven*,—to ~~the~~
home.”

To an inexperienced mind there is no sit
uation in life that appears to possess so many
advantages as matrimony; it is the *found*
of sand on which so many of the young &
romantic of both sexes have ever erected their
temples to happiness. In young hearts, hap
piness as naturally responds to marriage,
though it were its true rhyme — the love,
answer to dove. Every comedy ends with

marriage; every romance, after the heroine has surmounted the dangers of lawless banditti, ghostly apparitions, and long imprisonments, concludes with the union of the thoroughly harassed hero and the “lovely sufferer.” These animated descriptions of Hymeneal happiness would be more often allied to reality than fiction, if men wooed without masked hearts, —“plainly told their love,” fairly displayed the extent of their regard to interest; and if women *would be* women in the presence of their future husbands, and would throw aside the heroine, and all its fine arts; if the qualities of the mind,—the disparities of age, understanding, and temper, were more attentively considered. How strong and fearfully forcible, is the description of the state of matrimony in Molière’s *L’Avare*; he says, “Il est vrai que votre fille vous peut représenter que le mariage est une plus grande affaire qu’on ne peut croire; qu’il y va d’être heureux ou malheureux toute sa vie; et qu’un engagement

wedding

But it is
that when
time, as they
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converted
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gloomy &
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Of the 1
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been marrie

tion; after the fleetest of moons, the honey-moon, had withdrawn its light from the heart, and cold every-day life, with its retinue of regular feelings, took possession of the mind as its common mansion, the confidence of familiarity soon wore away the first bloom of obsequious politeness in the timid lover. He, by slow degrees, learned that the matrimonial state was not unattended by innumerable vexatious cares; and ("Oh shame, oh sorrow, and oh womankind!") that his wife was not utterly, unalterably, that perfect creature his imagination had represented her to be.

Lord Atherley was proportionably dispirited, every trivial circumstance added not a little to his petty trials; he fancied Lady Atherley did not submit with becoming deference to his opinions, and did not erect him into an idol! He worried her with trifles, but trifles make up the sum of life; and daily experience proves that a series of minute annoyances are even more trying to the temper than great and

such miseries. Collier was subject to fits of hide access which the doctor said he had on all sides, when he quelled the whole army at once, and lay as faint before him.

Collier's health had gradually become less robust. His fits of violent convulsions were worse than ever; he said. His nominal occupation was the newspaper in his hand, still according to the well-tried custom of old. He would often speak rudely to me in Mrs. Attley's presence,—he was one of that class of husbands whom women learn to regard leurs amours ses malades propres et lui faire tout honneur à leur maison, et cependant sans être d'extinction."

Lady Attley strove to hide it when the gradual discovery of her character accusèd her; but she was without a free and reciprocal

nation of thought, all power of sufferance and of social communion must fail. What was the gloom in the mind of Constance, when he awoke to her fate and found herself the wife of a frigid egotist? Lord Atherley, holly unaccustomed to seek or secure entertainment from studious occupation, became listless, and remained for hours lounging about the house. His first cheerfulness had forsaken him; for days Constance watched in silent anxiety the clouded countenance of her husband. "Oh, my Lord, beware of jealousy!" Jealousy and irritability (for no man ever is he is slave to the green devil), had, like melancholy, "marked him for their own;" his *tour propre* had been wounded, and to his jealousy was attached a degree of cunning, which, while he attempted to conceal it, was flimsily veiled as to become apparent to the eyes of the most casual observer.

In short, every act of Lady Atherley's, however innocent, was, by a distorted and self-

suspicioned mind, considered as a
guilt; he feared the world's ridicule,
not courage to withstand "the world
laugh, which scarce the firm philoso-
phers," and though he tried to be cour-
teous to Dudley was reserved; "he
had grown suspicion's sanctuary," no
doubt has once entered it is not pos-
sible to preserve the judgment unbiassed.
different glance that Ravensworth
gives to the pensive countenance of Con-
stance noticed by her husband as a look of
and every word he uttered to her
was strued into an utterance of attachmen-
t. says the great human searcher of
character?—"Suspicion entering wi-
th a serpent's fang poisons the healthy
jaundiced eye henceforth will look
at trifling act, and turn it into evil."

Lord Atherley became austere in
manner towards his wife, and betrayed
humour by sneers and sarcastic rem-

the strange fancies of London fine ladies for handsome men. One day when, in a reproachful mood, he taunted Lady Atherley with preferring the society of others to his own, and accumulated sundry little trifles "light as air," as the foundation of an argument between them, Lady Atherley replied with some asperity, and they quarrelled. Harassed and comfortless, Lady Atherley passed the remainder of the day in painful forebodings; her weeping eyes and disordered state of mind unfitting her for any meeting; and she retired early to her own chamber, "to commune with her own heart," and to meditate upon her situation. Her duties, and her calls for exertion,—her husband's worse than undisguised indifference,—his cruel suspicions, were more than she could bear; yet he must not know how painful were the tears she had shed, while she bitterly lamented the rashness and hopelessness of her engagement. Conscience, that unerring guide, pointed out to her, that the

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fortune u

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your fidel

suspicions i

Many malic

onymous advisers who appear to take a
great interest in our miseries. I hope, with
your assistance, to allay the storm, and put
an end to the cruel reports. Your character
has been assailed,—calumnies have been heaped
on you, appearances have unfortunately been
made against you,—but even now, much may be
done to set you right in the eyes of the
world."

"And imagine not," replied Constance,—
"angily sustained yet deeply affected, "that
I have that censure; and yet the consciousness
of the rectitude of my conduct"—

"Very true, Lady Atherley," interrupting
"if all judged you as justly as I do; but
you have enemies"—

"Enemies!" exclaimed Constance amazed,
"rely, Lord Atherley, you are not serious; I
have failed to create friends, but what
have I done to make enemies?"

"The world, my dear, will be censorious;
it will escape; and the woman who breaks through

the rules which public opinion and custom established, and who does not shrink from the appearance of guilt,—must in time claim to respect. One step alone restores honour, *my honour demand it!*—~~and~~ wholly give up the society of Mr. Ruthven." For a few moments Constance scowled.

" Does slander dare to—" here she faltered, and with an expression of kindness added, " Atherley, dear Atherley, I submit your judgment, — to your opinion, — to guidance." she held out her hand, and pressed it tenderly. Then, overwhelmed with emotion, burst into tears.

" Constance," said Lord Atherley, " much feeling as he was capable of indulging, yet there was exulting triumph in his heart. "you must be cheerful now, and are going to do all that is right. But, lo and behold! *you will be late for dinner.*" Here he reluctantly pressed her hand, and left her; for

time she remained in silent abstraction, then, rising with firmness said, “ He is right,—I ought not to see him any more ! ” The path of duty was straight before her ; in tears and humility of spirit she prayed for strength to follow it. In doing what she judged to be right, she felt she would bring comfort to her husband’s home and her own heart.

Lord Atherley still wished the world to think he was above suspicion. If a note was delivered to his wife, instead of a direct question, he would insidiously ask whether it was from her cousin Mary, trusting the answer would satisfy his curiosity ; if he asked Dudley to dinner, which he did occasionally, to avoid the scandal so abrupt a termination of their acquaintance would create,—he was careful to get some one of greater rank, that Lady Atherley might not fall to Dudley’s lot. When called out by business, he requested his “ dear Constance not to admit any visitors, as he would shortly return and take her out, and people

stayed so long." He selected the Tuesday and Thursday nights for the opera, in the hope that the House of Commons would keep vexatious intruders away from his box; a great *coup de maître*, however, was the man in which he ascertained who had called during the day: to accomplish this, he made a point of asking during dinner, when the servants were present, and there was a dead silence, "whether she had seen?" By this manœuvre Lady Atherley, had she been so inclined, could not have screened her morning visitors; accidental trifling circumstances occurred constantly to make Lord Atherley's doubts "confirm as strong as proofs of Holy Writ."

Lady Atherley was sitting for her picture one morning, when he had left her artist's in Newman-street, and had just turned into Oxford-street, a dark cabriolet was along with the speed of lightning and drove near the door of the artist; the groom sprang to the head, and a gentleman alighted. I

impossible to discern his features, his figure was that of Ravensworth ; nor was it quite clear into which house he had gone as there were many doors open,—solicitor's offices, attorneys', &c. Lord Atherley returned,—passed the briquet, and recognised Dudley's crest ; passing up and down the street, considering what steps he should take, he was met by Colonel Riddle.

"Ah ! Atherley ; of all others you are the man I wished to see."

Lord Atherley tried to escape. "A most distressing appointment,—I—"

"Nonsense, my dear fellow," replied the Colonel, "I am now going to the Clarendon ; Samme, who Jacquier swears is a regular *cordon bleu*, awaits me ; he has prepared a *déjeuner à fourchette*, and I must have your opinion."

At that moment Lady Atherley's carriage was called up.

"Ah ! Lady Atherley," said the Colonel, seizing Lord Atherley's arm, and crossing the

street, "allow me to put you in your carriage."

"Are you going home, my dear?" asked her sposo.

"I was thinking of taking a walk in the Park, it will, perhaps, get rid of my headache."

"Do, my dear," replied Lord Atherley, who, fancying Ravensworth still in safe conference with his lawyer or artist, thought it an excellent opportunity for Lady Atherley to indulge in a walk in the park, which at other times he opposed.

"I will," said Constance.

"The park"—"park!" echoed the footman. The carriage drove off.

Taking Colonel Serle's arm, and saying,— "Well, after all, this is the legitimate time for eating"—the *gourmets* wended their way towards Bond Street; they had not proceeded far, when the same dark cabriolet overtook them.

"Ah, Bibury!" exclaimed Colonel Serle;
"where's Ravensworth?"

"Why," replied the slang exquisite, "we started together in his cab; but as that old town tabby, Lady Babbleford's coachman, said of his load,—'I shot my rubbish in the park.' I then went to Kirkby's to see my picture of "Ariel," he has hit off George Doekeray admirably;—Dudley's a devil of a fellow for the *ladies'* plate; he said he was going to try a horse, a filly I think,—has some appointment I have no doubt. He makes terrible running, generally wins in a canter; I'm to pick them up in an hour at Kensington Gate. Ah! Lord Atherley, saw your drag in Newman Street,—clever near side horse; what's the figure?"

Lord Atherley made no reply, he now felt himself to be in what Mrs. Trollope would call "an unhandsome fix." By his own manœuvring he had sent his wife into the lion's jaws. He consoled himself first, for we are

bound to give the d——l all his due, t
might not meet ; and, secondly, with tl
pect of a *cotelette panée*. Plutarch says
circumstances show the real man bet
things of greater moment ; " we have
fore, entered into these minute details,
Lord Atherley's character in its prop
before our readers.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEETING IN THE PARK.

— Sincerity !

Thou first of virtues ! let no mortal leave
Thy onward path, although the earth should gape,
And from the gulph of hell destruction cry,
To take dissimulation's winding way.—DOUGLAS.

— Those vegetable puncheons

Call'd " Parks," where there is neither fruit nor flower
Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings ;
But after all it is the only " bower "
(In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable fair
Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.—BYRON.

We must now retrace our steps to *the park*,
so called par excellence. Hyde Park, now a
royal demesne, was part of the ancient manor
of Hida, which belonged to St. Peter's monas-
tery, Westminster, until the reign of Henry

the Eighth, when it became the proper crown.

Paris boasts her Champs Elysées de Boulogne ; Madrid, her far-fame Rome, her Corso ; Naples, her L Strada di Toledo ; Vienna, her P Glacis : within our own islands, I her Phœnix Park, and Edinburgh I Park ; but for magnificence of equal beauty of human face and form, there menade in Europe that comes up to E

It was one of those clear, fine, lovely days (out of the three hundred and odd of east wind, mist, and fog, that we enjoy in our metropolis), that "I visits, few and far between," come to us with sunshine and brightness ; a stream of carriages two and three coroneted panels in abundance, trooping equestrians of both sexes, some thoughtful pedestrians, crowds of young, elegant, beautiful women, obsequiously attended !

beaux; and lords and ladies were as “plenty as blackberries.”

To return to Lady Atherley, who anxious to avoid the crowd had turned her steps towards Kensington Gardens ; she had not, however, proceeded far in her walk when the sound of a horse startled her ; turning round, the first object that met her eyes was Dudley Ravensworth on horseback ; he immediately alighted. Constance’s heart flushed upon her countenance, a thousand contending feelings agitated her. She endeavoured, however, to command a fortitude for the explanation she was meditating, for since the harassing conversation of the preceding day Lady Atherley could not entirely shake off certain feelings of alarm ; availing herself then of this accidental opportunity, she determined to speak seriously to Ravensworth respecting the injurious suspicions and the ill-natured inferences that would be drawn by the world from their extreme intimacy.

Dudley now joined Constance, he looked at her with melancholy interest; he could not help observing how greatly she was altered, how much some wearing grief had impaired the graceful beauty of her form: they met in silence. Although deeply agitated, Constance was the first who spoke: "You have taken me by surprise," she said; "I had not the slightest idea of meeting you."

"I fear," replied Dudley, "that the abruptness of my appearance has disturbed you;" then, taking her listless yet nervous hand into his, added, "I have heard of your sufferings—I felt you were miserable."

"Alas, Dudley!" replied Constance, almost overpowered with her agitation, "your presence redoubles my terror and my grief."

"Constance! dearest Constance! listen to me; my feelings for you remain unchanged!"

"Dudley, you must not use that language; remember all we have suffered, all I have endured. Forget me, if I must respect you and myself."

"Never! never can I while I breathe!" passionately answered Ravensworth.

Constance was silent. They trod for a few minutes but to "the echo of their feet."

At length he asked her, with as much calmness as he could assume, "If she was happy, and whether there was aught he could do to render her more so?"

"You ask me if I am happy—do I look so? Yet I am not, or ought not to be unhappy; but even if I were so, you would not expect me to allow to any one that which I would scarcely confess to myself."

There was a long pause again, for Dudley felt how painful it must be to awaken recollections of the past. At length he said, "You have told me without intending it. Oh! your sadness, your pallid cheek, declining health, your languid eye, tell me, tell all the world, you are not happy. I know it, Constance! I know all that has passed, as well as all the former events of your life. Nothing which

concerns you is unknown to me,
thing which affects you is indifferen

Constance proceeded, — “ When
Lord Atherley—before I was eighteen
years older than myself—I did it
free consent; and therefore, if I ha
with the similarity of tastes and
might have found in a younger
no one to accuse but myself.”

“ Alas ! ” said Dudley, “ is
this ? ”

“ One reflection I have,” she
“ that I have never yet, in thoug
deed, failed in my duty as a wife
that consciousness remains I can n
happy ! ” She fell into a melanc
which Dudley was apprehensively a
turb. “ Lord Atherley is in some
kindest of husbands ! I ought to
This assertion she reiterated with a

“ Grant me but one last inter
Dudley, hurriedly.

, ask me not," tremblingly replied Con-
n a subdued voice.

my honour," said Dudley, with earnest-
you may trust a sad yet earnest heart."

k me not, I implore you ! you are un-
ngenerous," said Constance.

leed," replied Dudley, with warmth,
wrong me !"

give me—leave me ; for your sake, for
e, for both our sakes, I must not, dare
et you," said Constance.

ey was too deeply mortified at his altered
ts, too disappointed at the future, and
et it produced on Constance's mind as
upon his own, to venture any further
ion of his feelings on the subject. He
o speak of other things, of his journey,
gn politics, of—, but suddenly, the effort
oo great for him, he exclaimed, " Fare-
onstance ! we must now part ; one line I
rite before I leave England. Heaven
ou !" At that instant Lady Atherley's

~~comptons~~ drew up, and, without a word, I
was in.

Just as Eversworth had put Lady Almoner into the carriage, up drove a hackney to Kensington Gate : for, in those days, such and fives were not in existence ; the public had no opportunity of entering a hansom for eightpence. Before the coachman could get from his box—indeed the rattling vehicle had been come to a standstill—the door was opened from the steps rattled down, and Lord Audley and excited, alighted. “Heigh, ho !” cried he, hallooing, “stop, stop me ! as fast as his legs could carry him would have found it labour in vain, his butcher’s boy considerably called to the rescue. “ You’ve left part of your live behind.” The carriage stopped ; Lord Audley, panting and blowing like a porpoise at the door : it was opened, and, with a hush “ that he should not crowd Lady

” he entered, to the discomfiture of his *sposa*, those feet, “ those feet, those little feet, which he thought so pretty,” received the weight of a high-heeled spurred boot. Lord Atherley had daggers; but, finding looks had no bite, he had no scruple in upbraiding his wife for the duplicity, levity, and impropriety of her conduct in thus making an appointment with Audley.

Constance asserted her innocence: the discussion ended, like the generality of discussions, in mutual anger and alienation. In the mean time, the owner of coach No. 1526, having had the precaution to ascertain from the waiter at the Clarendon Hotel who his “*messire*” was, remained patiently *at a stand* by the stand, knowing full well that a good driving job would suit both his own pocket and his “osses’” comfort. About half-past seven in the evening the butler entered the dining-room to inform Lord Atherley, who was not in the best of humours, and who had

carriage drew up, and, without a word, sheltered it.

Just as Ravensworth had put Lady Athelney into the carriage, up drove a hackney-coach to Kensington Gate ; for, in those days, hansom cabs and flies were not in existence, the public had no opportunity of enjoying an hour's danger for eightpence. Before the coachman could get from his box—indeed, "brought-to," the door was opened from within, the steps rattled down, and Lord Athelney flushed and excited, alighted. "Heigh ! heigh ! " cried he, hallooing, "stop, stop!" panting as fast as his legs could carry him. He would have found it labour in vain, had he not been a butcher's boy considerably called to the man, " You 've left part of your live lard behind ! " The carriage stopped ; Lord Athelney, panting and blowing like a porpoise, soon at the door ; it was opened, and, with a hope " that he should not crowd Lady Athelney."

ley," he entered, to the discomfiture of his *sposa*, whose feet, "those feet, those little feet, which once he thought so pretty," received the weight of a high-heeled spurred boot. Lord Atherley looked daggers; but, finding looks had no effect, he had no scruple in upbraiding his wife for the duplicity, levity, and impropriety of her conduct in thus making an appointment with Dudley.

Constance asserted her innocence: the discussion ended, like the generality of discussions, in mutual anger and alienation. In the mean time, the owner of coach No. 1526, having had the precaution to ascertain from the waiter at the Clarendon Hotel who his "fare" was, remained patiently *at* a stand *off* the stand, knowing full well that a good waiting job would suit both his own pocket and his "osses'" comfort. About half-past one in the evening the butler entered the drawing-room to inform Lord Atherley, who was not in the best of humours, and who had

settled himself for the evening, took off his boots, enveloped himself *de chambre*, and thrust his feet into his slippers, that the hackney-coachman might know whether he was to wait.

"Wait!" replied he; "who?"
"Who?" said the coachman, sending him in his wishes to a
"Oh, no we never mention it!"
said the man, closing his ears polite.

"The man says he took your Lordship from the Clarendon Hotel to Kensington," said the coachman.
"He left you, my Lord. Eight halfpennies," said the coachman, claims eighteen shillings."

"Pay the scoundrel," cried the coachman impatiently, "and take the number."

During the remainder of that evening Atherley was far from being an agreeable companion; suffering under a heavy load of fidgets, he was in the most painful state of perplexity. He now bittered his precipitation in hurrying London.

to the Park. He writhed under the mortifying reflection that he had fallen into his own trap. He was angry with everything and everybody; with Ravensworth, for being the cause of his present excited and irritated feelings, with Lady Atherley, for aiding and "abetting in the same," and, in no slight degree, with himself, for his *bête ism*. His first feeling was to address a letter to Ravensworth. He sought his writing materials, a sputtering and splitting of pens was heard, but no nibbing: he scribbled a few hasty lines, then attempted to light a taper from a phosphorus box; a dozen matches were tried, but in the haste all failed, leaving, however, a pleasing atmosphere of sulphur, as though to suit the state of his mind. He jumped up to ring the bell for a candle. There is no better criterion of the state of a man's temper than the manner in which he rings a bell. The bell-rope came off in Lord Atherley's hand, having accomplished, however, a peal that must have disturbed the

whole house, and would have delighted what bell-ringers call “a college youth.” The panting servant opened the door, imagining, at least, that the house or his master must be on fire. It was only the latter. Lord Atherley ordered a candle, and subsequently, in his haste and anger, dropped the burning wax upon his fingers; the pain elicited such an anathema on the wax, that we think it better to hand it over to Mr. Sterne’s blotting angel of a Recorder, than insert it here.

“Have you burnt yourself, Atherley?” inquired Constance, with kindness.

“Most —— ?” replied the sposo, adding that reprehensible adverb which was uttered by a noble Bard to his Bardess, when, in the midst of the workings of the brain, she asked tenderly “If she bored him?”

For hours Lord Atherley paced the apartment as though endued with the undiscovered discovery of perpetual motion, opening and shutting the doors, throwing up and down the

windows, walking backwards and forwards, taking hasty pinches of snuff, doing, in fact, everything which irritable gentlemen do when not in the best tempers, and, finally, ending by destroying the note he had taken so much trouble to write.

CHAPTER IX.

DUDLEY'S LETTER.

" But I do see you are moved.
I am to pray you, not to strain my speech
To grosser issues nor to larger reach,
Than to suspicion."

Othello.

On l'a dit, la manie d'écrire a perdu tous les amis. C'est par là qu'ils périsseut tous. De tous les confidens le papier est le plus dangereux, le plus indiscret, le plus perfide. Les amans le croient leur ami, il n'est jamais que leur délateur. C'est toujours lui qui les dénonce et les livre à leurs ennemis naturels.

Marianna—par M. JULES SANDREAU.

SUCH is the deception practised on us by our own hearts, that, although their pulses may beat at the approach,—the senses thrill with emotion at the touch,—the "timid

"eye" glisten at the sight of the beloved object; yet, until circumstances have assured us of the reality, still wilfully do we believe ourselves uninfluenced by passion! Many an hour did Constance mentally review her past conduct: at last she acquired a courage to address the following letter to Ravensworth.

"I implore you to awaken yourself from the infatuation of the present moment!—you are but too fatally securing to both a mutual misery. Leave this country—I urge, I entreat it! What gratification could it be to you,—what consolation to me,—to meet under such altered circumstances?—to meet with the coldness of strangers?—to feel restrained from the power of conversation,—from the consciousness that all eyes are upon us?—No! it would be misery: better, far, to part till time has trained us to indifference, than to be near and yet estranged.

"C. A."

Grosvenor Square.

When Dudley received the letter he read it over and over, and was haunted by a thousand varying and conflicting emotions. Love would now struggle for mastery—and would now be driven down by a tender recollection of Constance's pure claim upon his unselfishness and negative protection. Amidst every change of feeling, he still saw that Constance was unhappy, and he shrank with anguish when he thought of the cause of her misery; now he thought himself virtue-armed, and resolved to enter her presence without betraying any token of the passion, of which he was but too, too conscious; — in vain would he try to deceive himself, that he could tear himself away for a time, and wean his passion from its object. He could, he thought, prove also the purity and disinterestedness of his subdued though deathless attachment: but it is impossible to describe the tumultuous feelings that "chased one another, like waves of the

deep," through his troubled heart. He seemed hurried to and fro on the ocean of his thoughts, like a wrecked thing.

"He only,—like an ocean weed, upturn,
And loose along the waste of waters borne,—
Was cast companionless, from wave to wave,
On life's rough sea,—and there was none to save!"

To remain now inactive was not in Dudley's power, and he at once determined upon a total change of destination. Before, however, he absented himself from England, for an indefinite period,—perhaps for ever—he, after many woven and unwoven resolves, asked an interview. This final and parting meeting, urged with all the solemnity of a last request, was granted; and the meeting must, of necessity, take place without the knowledge of Lord Atherley. The following afternoon, Lady Atherley's carriage drove up to the door of a fashionable milliner. Ravensworth had, under some pretext, entered the house, with a conscious and tremulous

— Insomme descended from her cartouche.
— Monsieur挽回 where vous attendez?" said
the dame Marchande des Modes. Did
she stand before her? — she spoke; her voice
was sorrowful. Racked by contending
emotions. Evermore she paced the room in
Insomme requiring courage, and anxiety
at last she said in a scene so painful, with
murmuring gentle voice addressed him.

— Bondley," said she: " if it will tend
your happiness to know that you possess
regard I do not hesitate to utter it—as a friend
alone I can preserve you, I have no other
means but that of friendship to bestow."

— Thank you for the kindness with which
you have spoken, and for the patience with
which you have borne my wayward temp
and Duchess, matched by the impassioned
restlessness of her manner.

" Believe me, I am anxious for your
welfare, that your happiness may not
be injured through me;" here her fortitude fa-

she buried her face in her hands and wept;
“don’t speak to me.”

“I cannot bear to see you give way thus!
come, come, we must have no tears,—you may
be happy yet.”

“No!” she said, trying in vain to repress
her sobs.

“Next week,” continued Dudley, “I leave
England, and”—the voice of Lady Chatfield
—“Oh, where is Lady Atherley? I am dying
to see her, I saw her carriage at the door!”
interrupted the conference. Lady Atherley
rushed to the door just as Lady Chatfield had
her hand upon it, and led her into another room.

We do not presume to be nice casuists, or
pronounce upon the conduct of Lady Atherley
in thus consenting to a clandestine meeting.
It is always to be regretted when the voice
of conscience is first neglected, when fear gets
the better of candour, or when we have not
the courage to be openly sincere. The evils
incurred by covert conduct are generally

greater than those which would be endured by perfect confidence. Step by step we enter “ upon the thousand paths that slope the way to crime;” concealment and mistrust between man and wife must ever bring wretchedness to both. But if Lady Atherley’s conscience whispered that she had acted with impropriety towards her husband; if she reproached *herself* for the duplicity she had practised; the pang was blunted by the specious sophistry that she had alleviated, in some degree, the distress of one whose happiness she had trifled with, and who had evinced for her a devotion, fervent, generous, and constant. She convinced herself, by the same false reasoning, that his feeling was the attachment of a brother to a sister,—all purity; that he would never cherish a thought detrimental to her honour, or harbour a wish criminal to the happiness of her husband. And she vowed in future never to have a thought or a wish unconfessed from that husband.

Lord Atherley still continued suspicious, and accident at length produced what seemed a positive confirmation of that turn of mind,

"Which dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!"

One morning, when Lord Atherley happened to pass through his wife's dressing-room, by apparent chance a letter caught his eye; the first glance suggested to him the idea that it was the hand-writing of Ravensworth, he examined the superscription, and found that his suspicions were well-founded. To a mind under the influence of blinding prejudice every indifferent circumstance is food for jealousy: determined to gratify his curiosity by the most unworthy means, he snatched up the letter, resolving to defer no longer the satisfaction of his doubts; he tore it open—it was a mere formal commonplace note. Foiled in this his dishonourable attempt, Lord Atherley almost regretted that the worst had not been confirmed to him.

He felt determined to investigate to the uttermost ; to relieve or confirm the doubts which haunted his mind. To

" Wear his eye thus,—not jealous nor secure ! "

After a few days had passed, Lord Atherley entered Lady Atherley's room, resolved to ransack the thousand nothings that composed a fashionable lady's toilet. It would be more pleasant to the romantic reader were we to say that on this occasion jealousy was the cause of this act of conjugal authority, but truth compels us to acknowledge that a more commonplace motive actuated Lord Atherley, namely, one of vulgar pounds, shillings, and pence; his object being to find a bill and receipt, of which a second demand of payment had been made. After a fruitless search through all the drawers in the bed-room, he entered his wife's dressing-room ; this sanctuary bore testimony to Lady Atherley's taste, the furniture was simple and elegant, the

h windows opened into a conservatory ;
fusion of sofas, fauteuils, and ottomans,
l ease; books carefully selected, Sevre-
Ormolu, vases, were here in beautiful
er; on a causeuse were books, music-
, notes; and an album was left care-
on a table of marquetry. The marble
ey-piece was ornamented with some ex-
e bronzes; and flower-stands, filled with
hoicest exotics, scattered around their
fragrance. The windows were crowded
the produce of hot-houses, and the myr-
id orange-tree bloomed in all the luxu-
of summer. Objects, indeed, of taste
attered in every direction. On a satin
n reclined at her perfect ease the small
Charles's dog, "Caresse," a gift from
ey. Once entered in this fairy spot,
Atherley soon forgot the object of his mis-
he mechanically opened the book-case ;
g up an album, which he looked into,
ife's maiden name appeared on the bind-

ing; his thoughts reverted to the period when he was a happy bachelor,—when he was the lover only! Lost in a reverie the book fell from his hands, and sundry papers were scattered over the floor; in replacing them the hand-writing of a note attracted his attention, it was addressed to Miss Graham. By what strange neglect this letter had been left in the open pages of an album, we leave to the speculative; but therein it had made a home—Lord Atherley looked at it, and, magnanimously, as he thought, replaced it; but in this act a more important event was brought to light, the envelope of a letter from Dudley to Lady Atherley, which, by an unaccountable omission, she had neglected to destroy, fell at his feet. He looked at the post-mark, the date was that of two days previous. He started—paused—and at length determined to exercise the greatest degree of subtlety and cunning in extracting the truth honestly from his wife. Lady Atherley was

in her morning room; Lord Atherley joined her, and artfully led to the subject.

"It is a long time since we have seen Ravensworth." When he uttered the name he fixed his eyes upon her; her countenance changed as she replied,—

"It is a long time. How long? Almost a fortnight."—

"Have you not heard from him?" Her lips formed themselves to say "No," and half failed. At that instant a gentle tap at the door was heard. Mrs. Viney, the *femme-de-chambre*, entered, and on perceiving Lord Atherley was about to retire, when Lady Atherley inquired what she wanted.

"Please, my lady," replied the agitated Abigail, "John desired me to tell your Ladyship Mr. Ravensworth was in the drawing-room. I went up stairs to your Ladyship's room." A word, in a half whisper, half suppressed shudder, escaped his Lordship's lips. Lord Atherley hurried out of the room, took

his hat, and was about to leave the house, when he suddenly altered his plans and hastily entered the drawing-room. His step was quick, and on his countenance there was a gathering storm. Lady Atherley was conscious, by the irrepressible restlessness of his demeanour, of what was passing in his mind; pride, outraged duty, and justifiable suspicions had resumed their stations in his heart, and his manner to Ravensworth was marked with repulsive coldness. He bowed hastily to him, then, muttering to himself, turned to the window; his heart struggled within him, and it was with the greatest difficulty he could control the passion which almost suffocated him. Ravensworth, with all the tact of a man of the world, assumed a courteous and ingenuous air in proportion as he saw Lord Atherley's increased dissatisfaction. He was alive to the avoidance of every topic which could by any chance-allusion strike a spark into the train that was laid in the husband's

breast. By degrees Lady Atherley recovered her self-possession; Ravensworth delivered a dozen remarks of nearly the same import and importance, and then took his leave. More than one dull brain has felt the assistance of a snuff-box to recover himself in a dilemma, to enable him to take up the ravelled thread of a discourse, or to divert the vigilance of observation. Lord Atherley, availing himself of this tabac-keep to retire to, nearly emptied his ammunition, which he conveyed with spasmodic energy to its final human cellular tomb.

On the following morning Lady Atherley had to encounter a most stormy breakfast-table; Lord Atherley was sullenly and internally furious under the reminiscence of the previous day's adventure; for though nothing new had transpired to justify his suspicions, nothing seemed to pacify the disturbances of his mind. It was, to use the newspaper phraseology, "magazine day;" he selected a popular sporting one, to which, under a fic-

titious title, he was an occasional contributor, and in which he described feats, "the fantasies of his brain," of which he was himself the hero. No modern Nimrod, ramrod, or fishing-rod, had ever surpassed his "wonderful leaps, unparalleled runs, extraordinary shots, unequalled fly-fishing." On turning to the notices to correspondents to see why an account of "an enormous salmon, killed by a celebrated sporting nobleman, not a hundred miles from Compton Audley," was not inserted, his attention was attracted to the following paragraph:—

"We recommend our fair correspondent, C. A., of Gr—r Sqre., to be more careful in the choice of her letter-box: her note, directed to D. R., Esq., was inadvertently put into our editor's receptacle, who feeling that he could not with propriety supply the honourable member's place, forwarded it to its destination.
N.B.—To prevent further disasters, the two-penny post is next door—No. 38."

"Humph!" growled Lord Atherley, throwing the magazine towards her: "'C. A. Grosvenor Square.' Look, look, Lady Atherley—here—what does this mean, madam?"

As Constance read the fatal notice which revealed her secret, her contending emotions called the blood into her cheeks.

"Really, I know not," faltered forth Lady Atherley.

"You have,—you have.—Oh, Constance Atherley," stormed Lord Atherley in a stentorian voice—"you have broken for ever the ties—(of love he was about to say)—the bonds between us."

Lady Atherley rose to retire, and in a tone so cold and so dignified that Lord Atherley cowered beneath it, said, "I am innocent. I have not wronged you."

Lord Atherley paused; in an instant his jealous suspicions revived, and, with a scrutinising look and anguished smile, said, "Madam, I shall know all. You must, you shall——"

At this moment their tet-o-tell was
broken by the announcement of Colon
Lancaster heavily left the room, con-
sidered and miserable; she had dece-
nument and if her lips had not
uttered a falsehood, they had lent th-
er a suffrage: to clear herself i-
possible without admitting feelings w-
ould not bring herself to avow. I
enveloped herself in a mystery that
her in her own eyes: in despair at
and unavowable light in which
circumstances had placed her, she
make a full confession.

The day passed heavily; Lord Ath-
lone concealed himself, and only returned in
dinner: there were no guests, and the
the servants left the room, passed in
Lord Athlone's swollen lip and glo-
omy eye gave a sure index of strong mental s-
and in his manner there was everyth-
ing of the nervous working of

wrought upon by the extreme violence of passion : he leaned against the back of his chair, to obtain, if possible, self-possession by compressed bodily repose. The pause was broken by Lord Atherley :—

" Well, madam, I wait with patience your vindication." Constance remained silent. Lord Atherley with an oath and additional vehemence said,—

" Madam, you drive me to vengeance. By heavens, you have deceived me!"

" Lord Atherley ! " replied Constance, " I have not deserved the charges you have so wantonly brought against me."

" Wantonly ! " said Lord Atherley in a sarcastic tone,—“ Once more I ask you if it is your intention to vindicate your honour ? ”

Constance became more pale than usual ; offended pride wrung her heart, her breast heaved convulsively, and turning her sad expressive eyes towards her husband with indescribable softness and grief,—said “ Though I

may have been indiscreet, I am not guilty; listen to me calmly, and I will explain to you the motives which have influenced me; jealous suspicions have embittered our domestic peace,—for a length of time I have perceived your confidence in me shaken,—you have betrayed distrust of me to the world; even so far did it, in the most humiliating manner, before my servants. This, my innocence could not bear, and I resolved to urge Mr. Ravensworth to absent himself entirely from us.” These words softened Lord Atherley; a feeling of regret succeeded his out-break of anger. Atherley continued, “As you best know, I have afforded me latterly no opportunity for conversing with him. I was, therefore, compelled to the only means left to me.”

There was a fearful conflict in Lord Atherley’s breast; past times, associations, and feelings arose and fell; mortified pride, unextinguished jealousy, struggled fiercely for the mastery; but better, kinder powers at length pre-

and softened his nature in the joy with which he hailed the removal of his suspicions. He saw his error ; he had suffered his mind to harbour the most unjust doubts. He had seen Constance humbled, had seen the tears come into her innocent eyes,—and the tempest within him was lulled. As these painful considerations presented themselves to his mind, in vain did he attempt to find some excuse, some palliation for his conduct. In all the bitterness of self-condemnation, he reflected on the harshness of his conduct towards his young wife, and solemnly determined that he would in future study her happiness alone, by dismissing from his imagination those unjust surmises which had so deeply wounded and outraged her feelings.

CHAPTER X.

SIR J. BIDDLECOMBE'S TOWN DINNER.

Great things were now to be achieved at
With massy plate for armour, knives and
For weapons ; but what muse since Hom
These feasts are not the worst part of his
To draw up in array a single day bill
Of modern dinners ?

Cook, see all your sauces be sharp and po-
pease, that they may commend you ; look !
and baked meats handsomely, and what ne-
and delicate made things.—BEATMOS*T* and F

On the long evenings of duets and trios !
The admirations and the speculations ;
The “ Mamma Mia's !” and the “ Amor
The “ Tanti palpiti,” on such occasion
The “ Lasciamis ” and quavering Addio's
Amongst our own most musical of nature
With “ Tu mi chamas's ” from Portingale
To soothe our ears, lest Italy should fail—

On a subsequent morning a card of Brobdingnag dimensions was placed upon Ravensworth's breakfast-table,—

"Sir John and Lady Biddlecombe request the honour of Mr. Ravensworth's company to dinner on Thursday, the 18th.

"Half-past seven. R. S. V. P.
"Nottingham-place House."

This was accompanied by a very small three-cornered, pink-edged, strongly-scented note, that would have made a capital fool's-cap for any idle subject of His Majesty the King of Lilliput: the contents ran as follow:—

"DEAR MR. RAVENSWORTH,

"*You senators are so difficult to get, that we have arranged next Thursday three weeks for a small dinner. Do pray give us the pleasure of your company. Au rivoire.*

"Ce Jeudi."

"J. BIDDLECOMBE.

"P. S. Our friends, the Atherleys, have promised to dine with us. We shall have a little music in the evening."

As the London season was now a close, Dudley availed himself of "lorn hope" with avidity. The 18th arrived, and at a few minutes past twelve Ravensworth drove up to a toll-house, then standing "alone in its Nottingham-place House, or Notting as Lady Biddlecombe, to give it its sounding name, usually called it,—rather on the antipodes, the *Ultima* fashionable world,—occupying the present Nottingham-place.

"Get dinner directly," said Sir Ravensworth was announced,—a de-
of reproach which all fidgety gentle-
in towards those delinquents who
and their viands waiting; a failing,
alike of turbot and temper. On
room Dudley found a large party
the sun threw a glare upon some do-
aged ladies, highly painted, and f-
dressed, in gaudy turbans, and

under the lustre of their diamond decorations, forming a most formidable circle. In the centre stood Lord Atherley, assuming an attitude before the fire-place, peculiar to Englishmen, though surprising to every other civilised being in all parts of the globe: Lady Atherley was wedged in between two very talkative ladies. The remainder of the gentlemen congregated at the windows, expatiating upon the weather, modern innovations, the East India House, and the change of good old times "when a man could sit down to dinner before night;" all agreeing that nothing was more awful than the half hour before feeding time!

Ravensworth soon discovered that the party was made up of "a mingled yarn," or as Harry Bibury called it, "well-dressed snobbery and nabobery, yellow-faced gentlemen, and canary-coloured ladies." On Dudley's name being announced, a buzz had passed the female coterie.

"Well, *he* is a handsome man—poor Lord Atherley,—gallant gay Lothario!"

One *contretemp* alone occurred. Biddlecombe had invited fourteen to dinner, unfortunately, only thirteen were present. B. was as superstitious as a Brahmin, as has already been remarked; a message was sent to Master Biddlecombe to get himself combed; dinner had been "put off" a quarter of an hour to give the hostess a chance, when a loud knocking at the door relieved the mind of the hostess, her hopeful son and heir into a fit of hysterics.

"It only wants five minutes to the hour," said Sir John in an angry tone, pulling a violent pull at the bell, thereby interrupting the cook, and hindering the butler, who had spite put down the soup he was in the act of putting on the table, to come up to the door with an unconscious air, inquire what was wanted.

Ravensworth made an attempt to speak to Lady Atherley, but was intercepted

Biddlecombe, and before he had answered her numerous inquiries after his own health, and his good father Sir Francis Ravensworth,—our old acquaintance Mr. Pilcher the butler made his appearance, and communicated the agreeable intelligence that dinner was upon the table; a fact substantiated by the presumptive evidence of the olfactory nerves of the whole party. “Lord Atherley, take the Countess Oliviera. Ravensworth, pray take Lady Biddlecombe!” exclaimed Sir John, going forward and offering Lady Atherley his arm. Now as Ravensworth had studied mathematics sufficiently to know that two parallel lines cannot meet, he at once saw that, with Sir John at the top and my Lady at the bottom, all chance of any communication with Constance was at least, during the dinner, at an end. He had lived in hopes that some stray lordling might have been picked up, who would have saved him the duty of the post of honour, and never did he feel

more forcibly the truth of the post of honour is a private

"Sorry Lord Eustace could not come to-day," said Lady Biddlecombe, "your old Westminster friend to meet you,—but both were unlucky! Won't you come up? The noble Lord, thus called, cond place of honour, as one of your supporters. "Only think, we were nearly sitting down this

"Dreadful, dreadful, my Lady gourmand said, when ridiculing superstition, 'What can be more unlucky than to sit down thirteen, when there are only twelve!'"

We have already described the origin of the custom, and Lady Biddlecombe's country cousin's reason for it. We will not inflict another "course" upon our readers,—but we may say that the description was not wholly disengaged from the truth. It is difficult to easily conceive the increased

London feast. Without our again entering into the minutiae, suffice it to say, that the dinner was “sent out” by a most fashionable pastry-cook of the day,—and was as good as £11s. 6d. per head (wine and dessert included) could make it: “remains of dinner to be returned to the pastry-cook.” His late Grace of Norfolk asserted “that a good dinner could not last too long, nor a bad one be too soon over;” on this principle five minutes would have been the limit of this feast. There was the usual miscellaneous conversation about the weather, the dog-days, the opera, the theatres, the last duel, the gaieties of the season, and other favourite topics of small talk, with the exclamatory eulogium upon the viands. Coffee was announced in the drawing-room; the ladies obeyed Lady Biddlecombe’s signal for retiring, though they had remained long after several thundering knocks had announced that the plot up stairs was thickening.

“Ravensworth!” said Sir John, as he re-

drink, Priddie?" "Claret!" *
of the latter,—said in a voice and
with a look of surprise which
imply "of course." "Did you e
a question?" he added in an und
if one drank port, that black poi
intoxicating liquor so much d
lower orders as Brummell calls it

Sir John now commenced his fa
"Have the royal dukes left E
asked, addressing the Rev. Mr
made himself very useful to the t
don by acting as a sort of aman
invitations, answering letters, r
penses, sitting at the bottom of Si
and always pioneering to his
"Their Royal Highnesses the J

and the Duke D'Angoulême 111

from home ;” and here, to use a sporting phrase, Sir John had a burst of five-and-twenty minutes without a check. However interesting these royal details might be to the host, his auditors would have shown less symptoms of impatience had he given the true version of the visit, and which we now lay before our readers :— Sir John had, for some months, been pestered by a joint-stock company of French Canadians to give his name and interest to as wild a scheme as ever emanated from the mind of man during the great bubble mania. Now Sir John having, in electioneering language, made his money “by the sweat of his brow,” had no idea of parting with it, or being caught with the “tub-thrown-to-a-whale” sort of bait of twenty-five per cent. and no risk. After sundry visits from the chairman *pro tem.*, and the honorary secretary, and the engineer, our worthy knight got so irate, that a general order was issued, forbidding the admission of any of the parties, their papers, or prospectuses. On the Sunday

previous to the dinner we have just alluded to, the Biddlecombes had accepted an invitation to pass the day at Harrow ; strict injunctions were left with the butler and footman not to be out of the way, as one of the strongest antipathies the ex-grocer of Ratborough had, was that his visitors should be answered by a female " help—"

There is, unfortunately, much truth in the old adage, that " when the cat's away the mice will play." Sunday was a beautiful day, and our friend Mr. Pilcher, having a friend at Hamstead, thought it a good opportunity of paying him a visit. Before leaving Nottingham-place House, he gave strict orders to the footman, Isaac, to remain at home. Until four o'clock this was duly attended to ; but at that hour a young woman (a cousin) happened to call in, and tempted the young man, with the college pudding head, to fetch a little walk in the Regent's Park. One being only was now left to do the honours of the Biddlecombe mansion ; and therefore to her, Martha Rowles, we will

introduce our readers. She had been brought up in a noble family, but, having been discovered in some slight peculations, a mere tea-and-sugar petty larceny, was dismissed. Martha had, however, reformed, and for some years had filled the situation of head housemaid, and, during the family's absence from town, head housekeeper at Nottingham-place House. She would have made an excellent duenna ; she was *Lynx-eyed*, quick-eared, vinegar-visaged, snap-pish, waspish, aspish ; having been watched herself, she thought it a peculiar right to watch others. The last words uttered to Mrs. Rowles were, to tell any visitors that the butler had only just stepped out, and, above all, not to admit the Frenchmen, nor any letters or papers they might wish to leave. Now, Martha had a very great national dislike to a Frenchman, almost amounting to the Nelsonian—a feeling, we are rejoiced to say, that no longer exists in the minds of our countrymen or women ; and it is “a consummation devoutly to be

wished," that the good feeling should be
cherished by the French, as well as by the English,—and that all national prejudices could "die daily."

At a little after five o'clock, when Mrs Rowles had just made up her mind to have a nice hot, comfortable cup of tea, and was toasting a muffin, all to herself, a loud thundering knock and a ringing of the bell were heard at the door. "I declare!" exclaimed the venerable lady, "one never can get one's meals in peace or comfort; the kettle's just sizzling, cups and saucers ready—well, I'm coming!" as she leisurely took off her apron, relinquished the toasting-fork, and proceeded to the door. Opening it, she perceived what she designated a "great to do" in the street—two state carriages, with panels emblazoned with arms flaming in Or and Gules, with two footmen in gorgeous liveries, attended each by a chasseur in green and gold, surrounded by a host of Sunday idlers.

"How is the Chevalier Biddlecombe?" inquired a good bluff-looking, Henry the VIII. sort of gentleman, inside. Martha's quick ears discovered by the accent that the parties were foreigners. Bristling up, and looking daggers, she uttered, "not at home; you're the same party as master positively forbid to enter the house—not at home—by no means!" But here our powers of description must yield to the graphic account of Mrs. Rowles herself, who, on the return of Sir John and Lady Biddlecombe was summoned to the drawing-room; and the following is a specimen of her sayings and doings :—

"Please Sir John, Mr. Pilcher had just stepped out to borrow Mr. Filcham's prayer-book, and Isaac the footman had gone round the corner to get our milk, when up drives two carriages, like my Lord Mayor's on the th of November: I knows what carriages should be, for when I lived with their races—"

"Never mind their Graces, pr
rupted Sir John.

"Well, as I was a saying, at
five up drives these two carri
myself tidy, and I goes to the
twinkling of an eye, I discove
were the identical Frenchmen
given strict orders never not to a
Crapaud, says I, fine feathers ma
but you shan't come over me w
taudry. Well, the gentleman i
broken English, How's Chuvalle
word,) Biddlecombe?

"None the better for your as
no use you're trying to leave the
— for master won't let any of yo
or your works, come into his h
Sir John groaned. "Well, the
men, such *guys* to be sure, and a
out like one of the gang as I see
in Robin Hood, his face cover
hair, began to parley-vous, and

swear at me in French. Oh, says I, a free-born Englishwoman an't to be scared away with you foreign frogs; so giving them a piece of my mind, I bangs the door in their faces."

Another groan from Sir John. " Looking through the hall-window, to see them safe off, I declare if I didn't see Count D'Aubigny in the second carriage,—he used often to call when I lived with their Graces;—"

" Well," interrupted Sir John, impatiently; " well, go on."

" Well, Sir John, when I sees Count D'Aubigny, says I, Martha Rowles has made a mistake; so I opens the door, runs to the second carriage, and explains, that it warn't them Frenchmen as master had left orders should not be admitted; I then goes to the first carriage, drops a low curtsey, and says, I hope your Highnesses will *excuse* me, for spite of your fine h'equipages, I didn't know you; all is not gold that glitters." Sir John uttered an unintelligible growl as he

SECONDA PARTE.

Ballad.—“Auld Robin Gray.” Signora Fanny Dupont (accompanied by herself on the pianoforte).

Solo on the Violin.—Pandean Pipes and Drum. *Rebeck's Reminiscences.*” Master Amati Geminiani Rebeck.

Duet.—“Ebben per mia memoria.” Madame Bellini Shrigoeul and Signora Dupont.

Solo on the Pianoforte.—Mr. Hayd'n Stuckey, “Homage aux Rois,” introducing the national airs of God save the King, and Vive Henri Quatre ; arranged by Mr. Hayd'n Stuckey, and dedicated by permission to Sir John Biddlecombe.

SIGNOR MAESTRO COSTACAO,
CONDUCTOR,

Lady Biddlecombe frequently interrupted the progress of the songs and pieces, by ejaculating “brava! beautiful! charming! brilliant! oh, splendid!” Ravensworth was wedged in between the pianoforte and her Ladyship, and had not a single opportunity of addressing Constance. He was pressed by Lady Biddlecombe to join Lady Cheetham's water party on the following day, and the inducement held out was the presence of the Atherleys. “You

won't fail," said Lady Biddlecombe to Lord Atherley as he was about to retire.

"Depend upon us," replied the noble Lord. The above important event of the dinner and concert was duly "placed on the books" in that register office of fame, the "Morning Post."

On the following morning that immortal press devoted itself to the description of Lady Biddlecombe's concert. The names of the distinguished guests, present and absent, (for her Ladyship's amanuensis had sent a list of all she had invited,) the dresses, the apartments, the decorations, the viands, and every minute arrangement, were detailed with the greatest accuracy and ostentatious minuteness; forming a catalogue *raisonnée* of all that was seen, done, or said, in the Nottingham-place House drawing-rooms.

We spare our readers a detailed panegyric and merely give a list of the company.

COUNTESSES—Oliviera, Caballero, Szezepanyowsky,
Atherley.

DOWAGER VISCOUNTESSES—Braemer, and Ellaby.

LADIES—Yellowlees, Woller, Wigglesworth, Wabbl
Fitz-Garratt, M'Swinne.

MESDAMES—Whiskin, Tylee, Catlow, Smithe, Hc
Jones, Bones.

MISSES—Whiskin, Tylee, Catlow, 3 Smithes, 2 Hc
3 Bones, 4 Jones.

Earl of Atherley.

Count Szezepanyowsky.

Barons Vredenburg, Van Fowinwinkle.

Hon. Augustus Priddie.

SIRS—Wyndham Yellowlees, Timothy Hauxwell,
zett Clutton, Dugald M'Swenie.

Rev. J. Possett.

Dudley Ravensworth, Esq., M.P.

MESSIEURS—Whiskin, Bibury, Tylee, Daymann, Triv
Bastick, Choppin.

CHAPTER XI.

WATER PARTY.

"Numberless barks manned with revellers in their best
garbs shot along the glancing tide."

Guide to Richmond.

"The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Burned on the water."

Antony and Cleopatra.

LONDON was growing hot, so everybody began to say, though during the heat of the dog-days they had been too busy to make the remark or notice the fact; that delightful period the end of July had arrived, that period which has been aptly likened to a game of *écarté* after a rubber of long whist. All were flocking away,—some to their own,

others to country houses of their friends—some to Spa, Baden Baden, Brighton, Ramsgate, and Cheltenham. No longer the roll of the frequent chariot, or the loud thunder of the footman's knock, was heard. The unswept straw at the mansion door showed that the waggons had been packed and had gone, and already were the pier glasses, the chandeliers, and curtains entombed in canvass; the golden saloons of the clubs were shut up, and the servants lounged at the untrodden entrances. How different was the aspect of Bond-street; the customless tradesman had retired to that *beau ideal* of a cockney's seaward paradise, Margate! The basin in the Green Park,—the favourite resort of nursery maids and children,—was deserted. A few officials chained to the purlieus of Parliament, some half-dozen fashionable stragglers, and a group of idle guardsmen loitering by the steps of their club,—were all that remained of the by-gone season.

ady Cheetham and Mrs. Barnsley Screw-water party, which we alluded to in our chapter, was however to take place. Unfortunately, in the days of which we write, Shy's Almanack was not in existence; the paper therefore could not be sold for the sum in lots for daily use, at eighteen-pence the set. The morning arrived,—the party had breakfasted at Lady Cheetham's house in York; the carriages were at the door; sundry waiters were in the hall, filled with cold fowls, ham, beef, mutton, veal, and lamb, salads, *de foie gras*, linen, cutlery, crockery, bottles of wine, "from humble Port to imperial sherry," porter, ale, and cider; when lo! a loud rumbling was heard. "What on earth can it be?" exclaimed Lady Cheetham; "surely it can't be thunder?"

"Oh no! impossible,—see how the clouds are breaking," responded Mrs. Barnsley Screwwater; "it's only Lady Dillingham's family

coach." At that moment a few drops fell; "merely heat drops." "How lucky!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"Very!" was the languid reply of the dandy, as he threw himself into a

"One consolation there is, it this must be a clearing shower," Cheetham, as a deluge of rain had all its fulness.

The younger part of the party, buoyant with hope, felt assured by Ashfield, "that it never rains, without a sign it's going to give over," proclaimed that it would clear up again; others prognosticated that the rain would continue for the day.

The unhappy party went to a hotel, and occupied themselves by looking at a bit of blue sky, which however, did not earnest of a general clearing. The clouds were, however, unrelentingly dark, and after some time the pitiless storm

without any seeming chance of abatement. It appeared that the assembly need not go to the water: the water had come to them. At length the darkness of the sky decorated itself with a streak of light, like a bit of blue ribbon; the sun attempted to peep out;—all was life at once: and, the carriages coming round, the party proceeded to Whitehall Stairs. A steam-boat was in readiness.

"Ah, these are days of invention," said Sir Marmaduke Screwton. "I remember the time when the *agrémens* of a water party consisted in sitting in a condensed state, like a trussed fowl, with a round iron rail as a support to your back,—when you were deluged with a cold shower-bath,—when you got your feet wet, and your stockings covered with black slimy mud, in getting into the boat,—when you were obliged to laugh at the commonplace joke, 'That your coat was on fire;' but on recovering the tails of your coat, you found that there was

luckily plenty of water. Not friend takes us easily and sets us to defy wind and weather?"

But we must devote a few patron and patroness of the day. She was a dowager of great small fortune; she lived upon as a promoter of water parties. She managed to get herself ladies, male and female, introduce guests. By recommending her eccentric friends to patronise others she had the command of boxes during the dull seasons. Tuesdays before Easter, the Ascot week, and the expiry of August, Lady Screwton's magnificently paraded on the doorsteps. By giving her name, and that of her daughters as patronesses of charitable cert, she received bonuses and tickets, and she presided over

and fancy fairs, and did much inexpensive fashionable charity.

Sir Marmaduke Screwton, M.P., brother-in-law to Mrs. Barnsley Screwton, was her Ladyship's worthy coadjutor. There certainly must be a great charm or a hidden recompense in being an M.P., or men would never condescend to drudge, cajole, flatter, and fawn,—to stoop to all ranks, to humour “the greasy rogues,” to gain that point. But to our senator: he was a vulgar being who mistook impudence for ease,—familiarity for good breeding, and had no *other* peculiarity to distinguish him. Mrs. Barnsley Screwton was a blooming young widow, anxious “to renew !”

In about half an hour the passengers were safely stowed on board the *Endeavour*, and boiled away, at the convulsive rate of ten knots an hour, towards the Eel-pie House at Twickenham. Dudley had unfortunately been detained in the House of Commons, and only

reached Whitehall Stairs in time to hear *that* the Endeavour had started some ten minutes. Whilst hesitating what to do, a jolly young waterman, who, *like* Dibdin's, "was thinking of nothing at all," approached Ravensworth, and said, "I see a smoker a-coming; she a'n't a regular player; but step into my wherry, I'll hail her, and mayhap she may give you a passage." At this moment Priddie drove up.

"Just in time to be too late, I fear," said the exquisite.

Dudley turned away disgusted at the prospect of his society; but Priddie would not take a hint, and entered into the proposed arrangements for joining the party.

In about a quarter of an hour the steam-boat neared the stairs; it was most gaudily decorated with flags and banners, and laurel and artificial roses, and pink and white calico awnings. Ravensworth hailed the captain, who, after some little consultation with the

passengers, agreed to take him and his friend to the Eel-pie House. Dudley got on board, accompanied by Priddie, and was about to congratulate himself upon his good fortune, when he was addressed by a pert, little, flippan^t, vulgar man, with a red face and a white wand.

"Beg pardon, sir, who have I the pleasure of addressing?"

"Mr. Ravensworth," replied Dudley.

"Mr. Ravensworth, M.P., I presume? I have the honour to be honorary secretary to the Cow-cross and West Smithfield Equitable Loan Society, and Anti-fraud Association. Josias Sims, sir, at your service; shall be proud to present you to the members, please to step this way."

Dudley mechanically followed the worthy secretary, and descending a few steps entered the cabin; loud voices burst upon his ears.

"Silence, ladies and gentlemen!" cried Mr. secretary Sims in a stentorian voice; "I have

the very great gratification you Mr. Ravensworth, M.P. honoured us with his precious occasion."

"Room for Mr. Ravens dozen voices, and Dudley fo into a seat; supported on flaunting, painted, vulgar le better half, as he called her her to the refined M.P.; an tall gaunt damsel, who glo of Buffy, Miss Adeliza Euph

Priddie, who had now joi clared she must be a relation popular comic actor, inasmuch seen a face so full of humor the luxuries that the tables c and West Smithfield Equitab groaned under, would be im it to say, slices of cold raw bee veal, coarse streaky ham, por sausages, saveloys, salad, radishe

resses, single and double Gloucester, cold plum-puddings, stale fruit tarts, carraway-seed biscuits, Bath buns, "decked the board." Bottled stout, ale and cider, spruce-beer, ginger-beer, soda-water, every liquor, from "*humble port-er*" to imperial pop, was ready for the corkscrew. A band, consisting of one fiddle, a clarionet, and a harp, played occasional airs throughout the repast; the Equitable dinner being ended, the ladies, headed by Mrs. Sims and the demoiselles Buffy and Sparling, retired upon deck. Mr. Ravensworth's health was proposed by the chairman, with an obligato flourish about the respectability of the Capelocracy, as the erudite secretary denominated the *Shopocracy* of Cow-cross and West Smithfield.

Shortly afterwards the gentlemen received a summons to join the ladies. A country-dance was called for, and Priddie opened the ball with Miss Matilda Julia Sparling, first cousin to the before-mentioned Adeliza; a

young lady with brief proportionable ankles, dress secured muslin dress, trimmed with red ribbon; ornament of rings, a huge gold open-worked stocking previously presented to her a woman of most surprises, with the reddest prettiest possible look.

"I beg, Mr. P. that I care of my niece Tilda, mixture of company, and similar."

"My Tilda," as Mrs. E. "and her cousin Addy," Miss Stiffkey Pudnams' Paragon, Clapham Rise; accomplishments, they had well known at all such session of knowledge, called known unknown tongue

enabled to carry on conversations before their mothers, chaperons, or instructresses. To the seeker of knowledge it may be as well to add, that the simple process of making the language, is by repeating every syllable, and placing a *g* before the vowel in its repetition; *e.g.*—as the grammars say—‘ How, howgow, you, yougou, and, andgand, it, itgit.’ As the cousins, attended by their chaperon, paced the deck, the following inquiry was made by Miss Addy, “ Aga, handgandsomegome mangan isgis Misgisterger Ragavensgenseworthgorth.” “ Vegerygy, isgis hege margarriedgied ? ” “ Ohgo, nogo,” replied Tilda, “ andgand richgich asgas Croe-gesusgus.” For the benefit of country gentlemen we translate the above: “ A handsome man is Mr. Ravensworth.” “ Very ; is he married ? ” “ Oh, no ; and rich as Croesus ! ” This colloquy was put an end to by the band striking up “ Drops of brandy,” in what might be called a *spirited* manner, and which proved that the musicians had imbibed no small quan-

tity of the name of the air they were playing.
At the expiration of three hours the "Favourite" (as the steamer was called) shot Richmond bridge, passed the Twickenham meadows, and neared the far famed Eel-pie island.

"Ladies and gentlemen, silence!" ejaculated Mr. Secretary Sims: "I have the pleasure to inform you, that after paying all expenses, I find I have a balance of five pounds, fourteen shillings and threepence halfpenny, in hand."

"Hear! hear!" cried the party.

"I propose," continued the popular chancellor of the exchequer, "that we should land at the island, and devote that sum to a tea-party for the ladies."

"Hear him! hear him!" shouted a dozen voices from the coterie assembled; "three cheers for Sims, and the Cow-cross and West Smithfield Equitable Loan Society! one cheer more!" As the last cheer began, the "Favourite" took up her moorings off the island, and Dudley, to his horror, saw his own party just sitting

down to dinner. Mr. Sims, attended by Mr. Kilwarden of St. Mary's Hill, or, as he was called, Mr. Kevarden of Simmery Hill, treasurer to the society, landed, accompanied by Mrs. Sparling and Buffy (who felt themselves rayther squeamish) and Dudley Ravensworth. The band played " Fly not yet," in honour of the departing guests, and a shout of " hip, hip, hurrah !" attracted the attention of the Cheetham pic-nic.

" Ravensworth and Priddie, I declare ! " echoed a dozen voices; " but who on earth has he got with him ? who can it be ? How extraordinary ! Well, I never !" and other ejaculations of surprise issued from many of the party. Messrs. Sims and Kilwarden, having deposited the *Cyclades* from the *Ægean* deep, as Priddie called them, in the bar, proceeded to make arrangements for *hot-watering, sugaring, milking,* and *shrimping* the Cow-cross and West Smithfield Equitable Loan Society, at the small charge of sixpence per head.

Dudley, taking leave of his friends, first formed party, but was unable to the object of his wishes. Lady Atherton had been seized upon by Priddie, and Dudley himself located between Mrs. Barnston, who obligingly made room for his young exquisite of the Guards, who pounce-box, &c. reminded you of a fop; the one little object of self-worship through every holiday. In the mean time the *foreign* "Favourite" had landed.

Tea over, Mr. Kilwarden rose to propose that there should be a whip among the men for punch and the weed. This proposal was carried unanimously, and in less than five minutes pipes and large bowls of arrack were produced. The band were ordered to "play up," and a country-dance, to the democratic air of "Merrily danced the Quakers." was commenced. Reader, picture to yourself the horror and consternation of Lady

and Mrs. Barnsley Screwton ! Waiters running to and fro with glasses of rum and water, "hot with,"—bottles of ale, bottles of stout, ginger-beer bottles going off, practical jokes going on. Nor did the nature of the conversation, interlarded as it was with oaths and coarse sayings, speak much for the quality of the company. In vain did Lady Cheetham send the waiter to request the party would not mar her fête :— shouts of laughter, uproarious mirth, bacchanalian songs, attended this remonstrance ; a temporary calm gave her hopes.

"Would Lady Atherley kindly favour us with a song ; it may, like Orpheus of old, 'soothe the savage brutes.' " Lady Atherley was about to reply, when a growled a-hem from Lord Atherley, which in language matrimonial means "hold your tongue!" decided the question.

"Silence for Miss Buffy's song!" shouted the president of the Loan Society ; and after sundry excuses of cold and hoarseness, Miss Buffy

warbled forth “ My art with love is beaten.” Dudley, disgusted at the disasters of the day, had just proposed a ramble to Lady Atherley ; and was congratulating himself that he should escape the noise and confusion of the island, when he heard his name loudly called. On turning round, he beheld two individuals almost breathless with haste ; the first gained upon him, and he recognised him as the stoker of the Favourite,—his *steam* was evidently up. “ Stop *her* ! ” he exclaimed, meaning “ stop him,” fancying himself still on board his craft. “ Sir, sir, Mr. Ravensworth ! Mr. Buffy insists upon your stopping ; he wants Miss Buffy’s ridikule.” At that moment Buffy himself, accompanied by Mr. Sparling, appeared, both evidently under the influence of the jolly god,—that is, if Bacchus presides over such vulgar beverages as are called upon to exhilarate loan societies !

“ Damn it, sir ! ” cried the infuriated puppy ; “ what, scudding away ?—heave to ! ”

Our readers must be informed that Dick Buffy was a junior clerk in one of the city wharfs, and was part proprietor, with his friend Jack Sparling and others, of the Water Wagtail cutter, a yacht of ten tons. Dick fancied himself a regular seaman, and dressed out after the fashion of the gentleman that dances the naval hornpipe at the minors,—that is, in checked shirt, glazed hat, striped stockings, blue jacket with anchor buttons, white trowsers, black neck-cloth, and boatswain's whistle. He always interlarded his conversation with nautical phrases,

" —— of caulking
And quarter-deck walking
Fore and aft
And abaft
Hookers, barkeys, and craft,
Of binnacles, bilboes, the boom called the spanker,
The best bower cable, the jib and sheet anchor,
Of lower deck guns, and of broadsides and chases,
Of taffrails and top-sails and splicing main braces."

" None of your piratical tricks, you lubber of a land shark," said Dick Buffy, staggering;
" heave to, or I'll fire a shot into you."

"Sarve him out, Dick," hiccupped Jack Sparling.

"Out of the way, sir!" said Dudley firmly.
"You're drunk."

"Drunk, am I?" replied Mr. Sparling with drunken solemnity. "I'm sober as, as a—judge, who dares deny it is a—a—a—that's what I say." Ravensworth kept his temper.

Lady Atherley frightened at the *rencontre* drew back, and remained a passive witness of the scene.

"What is it you want, gentlemen?" asked Dudley, with as much calmness as he could command.

"Stow your gab," replied the ireful Buffy. "I'll let you know what I want, you son of a sea-gun; when you took my sister in tow, you laid your grappling irons on part of her cargo. I've been cruising on the look-out for the last half hour; and now I've caught a glimpse of the proper signal, damme but every timber shall start before I give up the chase!"

"Sir," said Ravensworth, "your anger makes you forget yourself."

"Very heroic, pon honor," replied Sparling; "but whether intended for tragedy or comedy, fleece me if I can guess."

The mystery was now dissolved; Ravensworth remembered that when Priddie had led Miss Euphemia Adeliza Buffy forward to the dance, that she had entrusted him with her reticule; a salmon-coloured bag trimmed with blue ribbons, and ornamented with bead-work, and in which "*locker*" Miss Buffy had had the providence to "stow away," as her brother would have called it, certain sweet articles, in the shapes of figs, raisins, Norfolk biffins, Bath-buns, oranges and gingerbread. Dudley began to apologise, and, producing the "reticule," expressed his regret that an accident had occurred to it. This was evident from the stains that appeared. Buffy, on opening the "sac," found a jam of the articles we have before mentioned. This infuriated him to such

a degree, that he was about to break when he was held by Jack Sparrow. He was a lawyer's clerk, and knew that such cases and batteries were formidable affairs.

"Take the law of him, Dick. I will defend you yourself by striking him. You are addressing Ravensworth. "You can't do everything that's not actionable," said the student limb of the law.

"Law be d—d!" replied Dick. "I'll have nothing to do with tarring and feathering,—a round grating;—but here's my card." He presented his card; it ran as follows:

MR. BUFFY, JUN.
No. 10, PIG'S WHARF,
BLACKFRIARS.

"Really, sir," replied Ravensworth, very much shocked. "Permit me to assure you that I shall have no objection in forwarding one to—" "I'm sorry."

At this moment a shout from the Favourite announced that she was getting "under weigh."

"Well," said Sparling, "come along, Dick." Then, turning to Dudley, said, "If you are a gentleman, act as sitch; if not, we'll commence proceedings for the damage done, unless the debt is paid, together with five shillings for this application."

The pair reeled off together. Ravensworth, to his annoyance, found that a messenger from Lord Atherley had recalled Lady Atherley. The following day, the house of Dyde and Scribe, now Harding and Howell, Pall Mall, were considerably shocked at having to send a most beautiful "sac," embroidered in gold, to the following plebeian address;—"Miss E. A. BUFFON, (they had the good taste to alter the name,) No. 52, Gough Square, Farringdon Without."

We return to the Cheetham party, who, after considerable discussion, had agreed to adjourn to Vauxhall. All the carriages, cars,

vans, chaises, &c. that could Twickenham were retained to the "Royal Gardens;" the b one of Lady Cheetham's pet that the gentleman should pay

"Hear him, hear him!" elderly gentleman, who had wall-flowers of daughters.

"Including the steam-boa singers, and the carriages to

"Conductors included," s ham, "only three pounds, per head; how very cheap! tinued the lady, who had the main chance, "you cou your gardener to make up a flowers."

"Certainly, my lady."

"And don't forget that s will be quite a curiosity in L

"Thank you, my lady."

"I think, next week, we

another visit ;”—the only thing, on such occasions, her ladyship ever did pay. The obsequious landlord bowed, made up what was required, and charged at the head of his forces.

The party entered Vauxhall Gardens at a little after ten, just in time to hear a lady, dressed in sky-blue satin, swan's-down tippet, cream-coloured hat and feathers, sing a duet with a white waistcoat and falsetto voice, in which the former imitated the cries of a young infant, and entered into all the mysteries of the nursery, and the latter delighted his hearers with “his famous farm-yard imitations.”

Lady Cheetham expatiated upon the beauties of the gardens, the variegated lamps, the well-kept gravel walks, the Moorish band, the military band, the cosmorama, the dark walks, and the hermitage. After walking round and round the gardens, like horses in a mill, only with infinitely less purpose,—paired, not matched; for, in the rush to get seats at Twicken-

ham the most extraordinary couples found themselves together ; a bell announced the fireworks. Then came the rush, then the phiz ; rockets went up, sticks came down, amidst the ohs ! and ahs ! and oh laws ! and oh dears ! of the ladies. Mrs. Barnsley Screwton was frightened to a degree. Lady Cheetham declared it terrific. Blue lights, yellow lights, red lights blazed forth, and discovered an interesting-looking young lady, the fair Nourmahal, as the bills called her, with a blue turban, pink tunic, white spangled trowsers, yellow boots, who, with a pole, painted like a barber's, in her hand, was standing upon one leg on a tight rope, extremely well lit up. After sundry evolutions of twisting and twirling, the aforesaid damsels disappeared in an explosion of fireworks by the celebrated pyrotechnic artist, Signor Giovanni Flaruppi Vesuvio.

It was now time for "the fashion" to retire : unfortunately, in those days there was no

Simpson (the Vauxhall Beau Nash of me) to welcome one to the royal port or conduct one from it, with proper t; a link-boy was therefore deputed to Lady Cheetham's carriages. "Lady ham's carriage! Lady Cheetham's ser- " was shouted by all the links at the 'in *linked* sweetness long drawn out.' s moment a few heavy drops of rain d the denseness of the atmosphere ned a thunderstorm: there was a gene h for the few coaches on the stand. The y returned, assuring her ladyship "that arn't niver sich a thing as a coach or a "

dled together under a temporary awn he rain cullendering its way through e Cheetham party remained till near lock, when a sufficient number of hack- ches were enlisted. Of course, the

the lateness of the hour prevented them in to tea ; and, after begging men would be kind enough to pay and inform her of it on some future retired to her downy pillow.

Dudley had left the party just before the confusion at the gardens. To him had been indeed weary, stale, flat, unprofitable. Water parties have the usual allowance of that insipid element inseparable from the simple element

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTMAS AT COMPTON AUDLEY.

" And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had rolled,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all its hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night ;
On Christmas eve the bells were rung ;
On Christmas eve the mass was sung.

" Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all ;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doffed her pride.

" England was merry England when,
Old Christmas brought his sports again ;
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale ;
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year."

WALTER SCOTT'S *Marmion*.

s.almost every age and nation of the world
kind have had the strongest attachment

to ancient and long-established habits and customs, and in no country has there been a more bigotted devotion to them than in the good old times of “merrie England.” Merrie England no more! Busy, mercantile England! Modern refinement and innumerable innovations, led on by the universal spirit for gain, have drawn down upon us the trite remark, that we are “a nation of shopkeepers.” This calculating spirit has interfered with the amusements of the humbler classes; and, while we rejoice at the decline of many of the rude usages and brutal amusements of former days, we cannot but regret that the wakes, the Whitsun ales, the morris-dancing, pageants, mumming, the humours and frolic, the social and exhilarating meetings of sheep-shearing, harvest-home, May-day games, and Christmas revels,—which imparted such a charm to rural life,—are falling into disuse. Let, then, the amusements of the humbler orders be left alone, or worse will follow: man must be

employed. If you curtail the sports which have been for ages past the enjoyment of our peasants and manufacturers, secret societies and debating clubs will spring up; the people will be told that they are slaves, oppressed by the rich,—and then ensues a general rising of the disaffected; thence follow anarchy, discord, bloodshed, and ruin.

But to change our scene. Nothing can be more conducive to goodwill and fellowship between landlord and tenant, masters, labourers, and servants, than the festivities and mirth of these periodical feasts. The full meal of good and substantial food, the copious draughts of strong and generous liquor, animate the blood, open the heart, and expand the genial feelings; misconceptions and errors are acknowledged, lurking grudges and animosities die away: the rich and privileged classes, by living amongst their manly and high-minded peasantry, by mingling frankly with their less favoured brethren, gain their confidence, be-

welfare, and obtain that legitimate power which makes them objects of respect and admiration, and secures around them the feudal homage. Now, although Lord Atherley was not influenced by these honest feelings, he thought it only agreeable but expedient to detain portion of his time to his own country. Passing over the few months before that he had devoted to Britain after his departure from London, we find him at Compton Audley, whither a large party had been invited, and, among the rest, Ravensworth. Strange it is, yet more strange than true, that an absence of months had removed the weight

the remarks of a popular French novelist of our day :

"Pour tout ce qui regarde leur repos conjugal, les maris sont clairvoyans comme les aveugles : ils voient avec la main, et lorsque par hasard une vague inquiétude rôde autour d'eux, et leur fait pressentir le danger qui les menace, ils repoussent avec orgueil ces pressentiments salutaires ; ils affectent une héroïque confidence, ils accueillent le danger au lieu de chercher à le prévenir, ils font parade de la sécurité qu'ils n'ont pas."

Christmas,—like the oyster-shell grotto—"comes but once a year," and John Bull arrives at an annual determination to throw aside his surliness and dignity, and to enjoy himself. The higher classes, now in communication with their poorer brethren, are made cognisant of the deprivations and hardships to which the latter are exposed at this inclement season ; and their charity is inspired to flow

The blessing brought by the sea Christian world renders it a time to generous rejoicing, to universal though, alas! the good old customs ancestors have experienced a greater than the venerable seats of feudalism which those ancestors inhabited. On just the tide when people sigh towards the country. It is the interval the appointed end of all things and commencement. Even now, the rough-paced town gentleman, the ironed Londoner, pants for change and prefers the merry-makings under the bough,— the romping and the dancing in the country—to the dirty and disconsolate

All the world is indeed happy : the crackling faggot blazes upon the hearth, the glow of the fire-side seems to ripen the heart into kindly feelings ; the nipping frost *without* makes our roaring fires and warmest sympathies burn brighter *within*, and, in spite of inclement weather, hospitality is more keenly and uninterruptedlly enjoyed than ever. The skies, when bright, are without a single cloud ; the trees are embossed with rime ; and the heavy icicles are pendent, and glitter as if formed of solid silver.

Compton Audley was a handsome modern mansion, of a noble appearance without, and enormously comfortable within. It was at once vast, commodious, and elegant ; perfect in all the appointments a luxurious age can furnish. It stood on the south side of a hill, sheltered from the north by a fine old wood. The park, though not very extensive, was strikingly beautiful, from the inequality of the ground, which was richly clustered with the

most picturesque oaks and stumps
and traversed by the swift
stream—

“That to the brooding trees
Singeth a quiet tune.”

There were long avenues of chesnut, forming a vista from the house. The grounds were laid out with taste, and kept up with extreme care; and fountains were interspersed here and there among cypress and cedar trees. A broad path cut through the flowery grass, which was bordered by laurels, acacias, and other shrubs. The garden immediately under the library was a perfect paradise, with a profusion of the rarest flowers, mostly of the Italian than the English species. In the midst of a large part of the garden stood a marble basin, from which a cent *jet d'eau* threw its water into the air, catching the light. There were marble balustrades, urns, statues — contributing to the general radiance that harmonised with the surrounding trees.

flight of steps led down to a green mossy terrace, which extended all along the front of the house. Some fine old sycamores skirted the edge of a broad walk, and lent their mighty branches in rich masses of dark foliage, throwing a sweep of shadow upon the river beneath. At the extremity of this shaded walk a rustic building, formed of the trunks and boughs of aged trees with the bark on, had been fitted up for Constance, and was filled with birds, stands of flowers, and books. The sides and windows were “o'er-canopied with luscious woodbine.” Lord Atherley had built, to the admiration of the whole country, a princely set of hunting-stables; and Compton Audley possessed the superlative English merit of being situated within the reach of four packs of fox-hounds. Need we add, that the offices, gardens, green-houses, hot-houses, pineries, the extensive fruit-walls, were perfect; and that among the innumerable *agrémens*—though last, not least—Lord Atherley's *chef de cuisine* was

a “*cordon bleu* ;” so great an artist, that, had the cynic who stigmatised our nation as one “avec vingt religions et qu'une sauce” enjoyed one of Monsieur le Garlique’s dinners, he would have withdrawn the latter part of this unmerited sarcasm.

It was a bright November day when the Atherleys made their entrance into Compton Audley, for the Earl loved display. The morning arrived; all the avenues were lined with expecting gazers, and the collected groups were beguiling the time with various sports and frolics. At length the sound of rustic music, and the buzz of an approaching multitude which had collected from the adjacent villages, proclaimed beyond all doubt the arrival of the party at Compton Audley. In an instant the park rung with loud shouts; and two carriages, with outriders, drew up at the lodge gate. Lord Atherley was all smiles; the horses were taken from his carriage—a little scheme concocted by him and his steward,

and which made a flaming paragraph in the county papers. The Atherleys were, to use the newspaper phraseology, "drawn in triumph to their home by a happy and grateful tenantry!"

During the day there was a constant arrival of visitors, and at dinner at least thirty guests were assembled together. The party consisted of a strange *mélange*—sinecure patriots and M.P.'s, seeking amusement during the recess; men of fashion, indulging in change of scene; mammas, hunting marrying men; young ladies, *backing* their pointing parents; with the usual proportion of cub lords, dandies, and twaddlers.

There is a venerable axiom, "that, to view our social life aright in its true national character, you must be permitted to see and mingle with the circle of a country mansion well filled;" and it unquestionably is true, that, only in a country house, or in the midst of his park, his farms, his woods and plantations, an Eng-

lishman breaks from his habits gives vent to his natural feelings; formalities and civilities of a social set aside; the invigorating sport of hunting bring men together in good humour:—what a contrast to the heats of political contentions, ostentation, the turning night into day, modern Babel! In the true spirit of freedom all constraint is removed, kindred spirits assembled; breakfast waits for nobody, nobody waits for breakfast; a meal alone, or in coteries of his friends. At luncheon a general “gathering” when parties or *tête-à-têtes* are making, driving, or riding (*en passant*). Compton Audley was in a beautiful mood for excursions); each partakes of what he likes best according to his own inclination, the field, the gentle craft, books, all the elegancies of social life, the perfection of human enjoyment.

Dudley delighted in Compton Audley ; independent of the attraction of the exquisite paintings, the splendid objects of *virtù* afforded him a mental recreation which for the moment absorbed all other feelings. The rules of proportion and the orders of art may be acquired by study; but that just discernment of the beautiful, which is denominated taste, is a gift of nature, and this Ravensworth possessed to an eminent degree. He would have enjoyed it more, but unfortunately he found in one of the guests, Mr. Broadlands, an agriculturist ; in another, Sir Mark Buller, a determined sportsman : both were anxious to secure his interest for the corn and game laws, and therefore tried to inoculate him with their views, or rather *view-halloos*. Every morning soon after day-break the stentorian voice of Sir Mark was heard in Ravensworth's room ; and the figure of the worthy Baronet, equipped for shooting, startled him as he awoke from a dream of Constance. Had he been left alone,—had he been

left to amuse himself,—he would have been contented; but to devote himself to stubble-fields and ploughed lands from ten till four o'clock was too energetic a pleasure: on his return home, fatigued, he would have ensconced himself in the library easy-chair, but Mr. Broadlands would insist upon taking him to the farm, to see a new thrashing-machine, or some new-fangled plough. Nor was all this the work of a day; for Dudley never rested his weary head on the pillow, without being conscious that he must

"To-morrow to fresh fields and pastimes new."

The remaining guests went through the usual routine of country-house life, as the actors say "letter perfect." The gentlemen visited the paddocks, the farm, and the dairy; poked into the piggeries and the out-houses; surveyed the flower and kitchen gardens, with their conservatories, orangeries, forcing-houses, mushroom establishment, and hot-beds; inspected the sta-

bles, admired the hunters, hacks, and coach-horses; and were seen crawling about from spot to spot like wasps at the end of a wet summer. The ladies strolled in the flower-garden, copied music, tried over the latest waltzes, learned new patterns, turned over portfolios of autographs and caricatures,—and did their little idleings with a patience perfectly exemplary. They enjoyed that perfection of female enjoyment—“ having nothing to do, and plenty of time to do it in.”

Christmas arrived, and with it all its festivities. “ What can be more dreadful than your merry Christmas,” exclaimed Priddie, who formed one of the party, “ with its snow and frost? Does it not put an end to hunting, and brings it not with it the positive fear of opening a letter, and finding it ‘an annual’ from your boot-maker, *schneider*, hatter, &c. requesting attention to your small account,—the firm having dissolved, and the affairs of the late concern being in the hands of solicitors ? ”

"But surely," replied the Home Mangeon, a spinster who preferred in the country than to "serve" in polis, "Christmas is a glorious tin

"Protect me," replied Priddie, "glorious days;" Christmas day, day, Twelfth day, with all their accompaniments of splendid sirloin mous bliss of plum-puddings, mince-pies, frosted cakes, count that climax of vulgar motion—country-dance!"

Olden hospitality and profusely displayed at Compton Audley long series of boisterous days the denly cleared, and New Year's day holiday garb; it was the anniversary Atherley's birthday, an event that kept with boisterous mirth.

All the county were on the *qui*

brewed at Lord Atherley's marriage, flowed in all directions ; and the food of our hardy sires smoked on the festive board. The tenants and their families partook of a plenteous repast ; all was a scene of joy and festivity. Equal gaiety reigned within doors ; every face beamed with pleasure, and every voice extolled the worth of the hospitable host and hostess.

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CHAPTER XIII.

HUNT AT COMPTON AUDLEY.

—“ Nothing I admire
Beyond the running of the well-train'd pack,
The trainings, everything ! keen on the scent !
At fault none losing heart ! but all at work !
None leaving his task to another ! answering
The watchful huntsman's caution, check, or cheer,
As steed his rider's rein ! Away they go !
How close they keep together ! What a pack !
Nor turn nor ditch nor stream divides them—as if
They moved with one intelligence, act, will !
And then the concert they keep up ! enough
To make one tenant of the merry wood,
To list their jocund music !

* * * * *

To wood and glen, hamlet and town, it is
A laughing holiday ! Not a hill-top
But's then alive ! Footmen with horsemen vie ;
All earth 's astir, roused with the revelry

Of vigour, health, and joy ! Cheer awakes cheer ;
While Echo's mimic tongue, that never tires,
Keeps up the hearty din ! Each face is then
Its neighbour's glass—where gladness sees itself,
And at the bright reflection, grows more glad !
Breaks into tenfold mirth ! laughs like a child !
Would make a gift of its heart, it is so free ;
Would scarce accept a kingdom, 'tis so rich ;
Shakes hands with all, and vows it never knew
That life was life before."

SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

A SOUTHERLY wind, though not a very cloudy sky, ushered in the morning of the 10th of January ; and at nine o'clock a most formidable number of the disciples of Nimrod were assembled at the breakfast-table at Compton Audley. There are few scenes more cheering or exhilarating than this social meal, which precedes a day's hunting ; the blazing hearth, "the bubbling and loud hissing urn," the abundant fare of the side-table, for Lord Atherley's was a Scotch "breakfast,"—

" Not like the ghost
Of your curst English breakfast, your tea and your toast ;"



"au vin de Champagne." Escorted by the "Pinks," they reached Warbleton Gorse, the place of meeting. How gay was the scene! red-coats, by dozens, were seen galloping towards this place of rendezvous; a line of carriages was drawn up, filled with the beauty and fashion of the neighbourhood.

"Now, Dudley!" exclaimed Lord Atherley; "you'll take care of Lady Atherley:—gently,—Azalia's very fresh. Why, John, where's my sandwich-box and my flask? we *must* keep body and soul together!" A few fair equestrians were mingled with the gentlemen.

Dudley was now assisting Lady Atherley to mount; and, retiring from the crowd, they took up their station on a rising ground. The hounds were hardly put into the gorse when they began to feather. Tom Baldwin, the huntsman, cheered them on. "Have at him, Melody! Yoicks! wind him, Dairymaid, my little woman!—a fox! I'll pound him. Hold

hard, gentlemen ! let them settle." A pause, and away they went, with a ascent, best pace, down the valley : a brook which some chosen few, amo the noble Earl, got into ; but, as old T

" Then give me the man to whom nought con
One horse or another, *that* country or *this* ;
Who through falls and bad starts, undaunte
Rides up to this motto, ' Be with them I v

Through Stripes-hanger they hun
beautifully, skirting Minstead-cover ;
tled him by Woodbeding-heath, ever
doing his work.

" Have at him Jew-boy ! Milk
girl !" cried Tom Baldwin ; " they'll
—I'll pound it !"

On—on they went, crossed the W
road, which let in a few of the skirter
them Constance and Dudley. So
the country known to the latter, tha
thus far piloted Lady Atherley in saf
was the very *beau idéal* of a horse

combining grace, confidence, and judgment, with a perfect hand, and possessing a most exquisite seat,

“ *qualis equos Threissa fatigat
Harpalyce, volucremque fugâ prævertitur Eurum ;* ”

but, unlike the Thracian huntress, happily tempering courage with a feminine deportment.

“ Hold hard, gentlemen ; give them time ! ” shouted old Tom, a veteran of fifty-four, as they came to a check in Gatton Spinny.

“ Tally ho ! ” sputtered Lord Atherley, who, with flask in hand and a half-devoured sandwich in his mouth, had viewed the “ wily animal.”

“ Off to Yelverton ! ” exclaimed Tom, “ we'll kill him yet ! ” Then seeing Lady Atherley, and doffing his velvet cap with the most affectionate gallantry, he said, “ Ah, my pretty lady, take the bridle-road to the left, leave Haldon on your right, and I'll warrant you'll be in time to win the brush ! ”

Away they went : Constance followed the huntsman's direction not proceeded far, when, in crossing horse Lady Atherley rode, the filia, put its foot in a rut, fell and precipitated the lovely rider To dismount, to call for assistance, to convey Constance, who was com by the violence of the fall, to the was the work of a few minutes. established at the Dun Cow, H Dudley, after sending for the patched his groom to Lord At reected a postboy "on," to order to be brought immediately. M had served in the medical depart army in Spain, pronounced the likely to be attended with bad and having bandaged Lady A which had been slightly sprained and took his leave. Left, then, Ravensworth and the head chanc

with that discretion so requisite to females in her department, thought her absence would be more agreeable than her company, and accordingly left the room,—Lady Atherley enjoyed a half-hour's fitful repose. During that time of brief rest we may introduce our readers to a most important personage, Mr. Wright, head-waiter and manager of the Dun Cow.

Harry Wright had been born and bred within the sound of Bow-bells: he exasperated the eighth letter of the alphabet most terrifically. He had been literally brought up in the bar, his father and grandfather had been waiters before him: the very first accents he had been taught to lisp were, “Coming, Sir!” At an early age he was placed in a club, to learn his business; and there he first developed those talents which, in after-life, were of such marked service to him. At the period we allude to, clubs were in their infancies; and the one, now no longer in existence, at which

Harry's precocious genius was given the name of - the cheap and the ~~the~~ smart boy." As is usual, join from five o'clock onwards. But Harry's few words, then a lad of six years in the steward.

- I wish a few words, Mr. Sir
will at your leisure leisure."

- Walk in, Harry: I hope not
long for your father's sake,—I
you comfortable?" replied the g
over.

- There something on my mind
very ~~longing~~?"

- Speak out, my boy?"

- Er, I tell ye not his his; you
two gentlemen the dines here eve
in near the road. Well, they com
as we, sit up; they waits half an
hour, and takes a cut at the
six o'clock they winds up with a
bit for I and & concluding w

beer ! But that aint the vorst, for I'm
if they don't order at nine o'clock two
of tea werry hot, werry sweet, and werry
; and then they grombles as it is too
, desires me to bring some *ot* water, and
akes and makes a hextra cup of tea
; ewading the charge, witch is nine-pence
tea, but only four-pence a cup. Now,
haint a dodge, I don't know vot is."

affair coming to the ears of the com-
caused a sensation ; and, as the weakest
go to the wall, Harry, spite of the
trances of the steward, was dismissed.
s talents were not long allowed to remain
He was shortly taken into a tavern
the "Piazzas," where he passed from
d into manhood. The coffee-house we-
to was then in great vogue, and Harry
n promoted to the important situation
l-waiter. He had won his employer's
y the economical manner in which he
d a bottle of wine of its fair propor-

tions. "Being me a both
waiter?"

"Yes, sir; I'll make a p
Harry with a knowing wink
straining, and the usual per
managed to accomplish.

There was no man that
master of his customers qu
If a country squire, rode
voracious rural appetite, i
would recommend a beau
pork from his master's fa
cour being an alley out of
should the gentleman like a
he was to be sure to ask fo
worth a guinea a bottle.
ture to suggest to the gentle
and if going to the play, t
the bar, as there were so i
the Pôrrees. If an emacia
wise man of the East shoul
point out the excellence of th

the curried lobster, "from a receipt given master by the nabob of Arcot's interpreter." If a pampered West-end exquisite lisped out, "Anything you've got—quick!"—he flattered his palate by a delicate smelt,—white bait, pulled and grilled chicken, and a "bottle of Bourdeaux from master's own vineyard," gently saying, "that a lady in a green chariot had inquired for the captain, but would not leave her name." To gentlemen with Bardolph visages he would confidentially communicate the fact of there being half a dozen magnums of the finest vintage,—the Regent had offered the largest sum for them: the above half dozen, at a calculation of one or two per week consumed, had lasted nearly seven years! To "love-sick swains" who penned pink billet-doux to the nymphs of the theatres, Harry was equally attentive: "He had a friend behind the scenes who would see the note delivered." In short, he was the Crichton of the fraternity of waiters. In the art of making punch,

Mr. Hause begins restor-
ing him. And undeniably
Mr. Wright was a man of
some imperishable self-
sacrifice in his expression.—
A horse such a friend
is to the service, that I
never stopped at the poi-
t of remunerating Mr. Wright
fully—but now—! a love for
the animal will be knew every
selfishness which, however, I
cannot "name off;" and occu-
ping a trifling part of the stu-
pid sum, to whom he has
asked to picked up a reason-
able of losing, the amount
and I will open him for
allowing say he "set his
horse." the horse that he kne-
w... and Harry was cleaned
himself. "What ge-

claimed, " could back a Brummagem horse ?" Harry paid his debts of honour, and for a time retired to an excellent hostelry at Richmond. From thence he had been promoted to the management of the Dun Cow at Highbury Cross. Our digression has led us away from a conversation that was being carried on in the bar, between the above redoubtable hero, and young Jem, a *waiterette*, and which we give verbatim—Jem loquitur :

" Shocking accident that — No. 4. Poor gentleman ! how dreadfully cut up he seems at his wife's accident."

" Wife !" replied Harry, with a knowing sort of a ' do-you-see-any-sand-in-my-eyeish ' look ; " wife ! oh, no, not his wife ; can halways tell the difference,—learnt it when I lived at Richmond."

" Learnt what ?" exclaimed the novice, looking up with reverential awe to this very Nestor of " coming, sirs."

" Why, I tell you what it is, and how you

she is fainre to know the differ
gentleman comes to the house
uninvited. "Waiter! waiter!" pul
and says. "Get dinner,—soup,
bits of dessert, and a bottle of i-
ron may depend upon it he's
likely to his sweetheart or his "—
he gently touches the bell, and
gives dinner, anything that
says. "Nancy, my love, as I
well have half a pint of she
name dessert, as all fruit is so
assured he is lawfully, lawfu
narrowway. The proof's infal
is meeting a private soldier an
female, he never walks so with
longing look."

But this instructive tele-
gram is by the arrival of a part
tary sportsmen, quartered in t
barracks, and who for "saul l
passed mine host of the Du
making a call.

"Well, Harry, old fellow! how does the world use you?" said a young mustachioed Cornet.

"Pretty well, Captain Harcourt, thank you." Harry always gave brevet rank.

"Bring me a glass of the undeniable, hot and strong,—club fashion. Do you understand?"

"Would the gentlemen like any thing to eat? there's an excellent cold beef-steak pie," said Harry, imperturbably, for he always had an eye to business.

"Bring the pie of course, and lots of hot potatoes."

"Yes, sar."

"And some pickles."

"Yes, sar."

"And plenty of ale, your own tap."

"Yes, sar." Harry left the room, but shortly returned.

"Who's to win the Derby?"

"Yes, sar." The luncheon was laid out.

"Any sport, gentlemen?" inquired Harry.

"Capital run, old boy! but my mare thr—~~e~~
a shoe," replied Cornet Montague.

"And a demn'd farmer crossed me ~~and~~
threw me out," responded Sir John Fitzosborne.

"But here's Williams, he'll tell us all about it."

At this moment he entered.

"Well, Williams, what did you do when we
left? You were going rather faster than light-
ning, as if you had a letter to deliver to the fox."

"Capital run!" exclaimed the latter, who
from his fibbertigibbet propensities and love of
the stable was generally known by the familiar
appellation of 'Will of the Wisp'; —five-and-
forty minutes, only one check, all grass, and
killed at Yelverton! I lost my start, had
great difficulty to regain it, trying to get an
introduction to that perfect Diana. What a
lucky fellow Atherley is!"

"Or rather Ravensworth," replied Montague.

"Ah! she was his first love; 'et on revient
toujours à ses premiers amours,'" chanted Sir
John.

"But what's that?—a find, by heaven!" exclaimed Charles Williams, calling the attention of the party to two horses that were being led through the yard. "I'll swear to the hay; that's my lady's."

"And I to the chestnut," said Sir John; "it's the gallant gay Lothario's. Harry, Harry!" Mr. Wright entered.

"Did you call, gentlemen?"

"In the name of morality! Harry, what is going on at the Dun Cow?" asked Montague. "Where are the respective owners of those horses?"

"Up stairs in No. 4. The lady has had a very bad fall—rayther better now; they've sent for the carriage," answered Harry.

"Come, come, Harry, we won't have it,—it's a regular settled affair!"

"Upon my word, gentlemen!" replied Mr. Wright.

"Nonsense!" interrupted Harcourt, "you'd swear to it; you are like the Irish witness, who

took his oath before he got up in the morning that he would not speak a word of truth during the day ; that's what you'd call at Newmarket 'hedging your conscience.' But is Lord Atherley here?"

" No, sir ; he has been sent for."

" Poor fellow ! Poor devil ! Lucky rascal ! What flats some men are !" escaped the lips of the party, who, mounting their horses, lit their cigars, and proceeded to ride a steeple-chase home in the most approved Melton manner. Charley Williams was to receive a sovereign from each of the party, have a start, and to whoever caught him he was to return double the stakes back. Only one collar-bone was broken on this occasion.

Lady Atherley had created a great sensation at the beginning of the day. Her disappearance, accompanied by Dudley, had been commented upon ; hints and innuendoes had been thrown out, and had furnished food to the scandal-loving propensities of the hunting-field. A few

random shots at the mess, and the usual gossip of the waiters, boots, chambermaids, and ostlers of the Dun Cow, spread like wild-fire. In less than an hour the Highbury Cross Figaro hinted at an elopement; the penny-a-liners were already at work for the public prints. In the mean time Lady Atherley's carriage had arrived. Before, however, taking leave of the Dun Cow, we must pay a parting visit to the tap, where were assembled a most motley group. First and foremost, Joseph Sharp, ostler, always called by his sponsorial abbreviation Joe; who, agreeably to the generally recognised *ειδωλον* of the species, was a stout bloated man, encased in velveteen, with a sealskin cap;

" Wallowing, unwieldy, enormous in his gait ;

* * * * *

Big as his butt, and for the self-same use—

To take in stores of strong-fermented juice."

Next came his Scotch terrier " Wasp," whose collar showed the waggishness of his master: the inscription ran thus:—" I'm Joseph Sharp's

First and second turn-out boys
Fitzosborne's tiger, and Cornet Gr
shire groom, Sam Fulford, com
group. The tiger was a regular Lon
who was " chaffing" some countr
unmercifully ; " Talk of that bull
tame,"—looking at a miserable bir
trying to draw a small bucket out o
" vy, he's nothing to vot I'se got at l
ve've a pet oyster as follows me about
yard, a regular Colchester vone !"

" It 's all right and no mistak
York, pulling from his pocket thre
and a pea. " Now, young Saacy, I
revenge. Down with your brownies

mence a game, which has been of late years immortalised in the political world by its most talented member,—how justly we will not attempt to say. “Would you like to bet half a crown?” persevered Sam, addressing a quiet, sedate, methodistical-looking man, who had just entered, and who, by his faded plush breeches and drab upper benjamin, was evidently a coachman out of place, and one of those who advertise for a situation in a “sober, religious family.”

“I never wager more than a halfpenny bun,” replied the man; “and then, if I lose, I always stipulate to get the first bite.”

Failing in this attempt, the industrious *pie-voleur* gave the following running accompaniment.

“Vone, two, three—game of the little pea. Hegham, Vindsor, Staines; Vindsor’s vere the King lives. The honly difference between is castle and my thimble his, that his is permanent, and mine’s locomotive. It’s I to hide,

and you to find ; it only requires a quick
and a good hobservation for to say ver
little hobject his. This is the *multum in p*
game, vich means as you may vin a
large sum with a werry small capital. 'as plays can't vin, and them as don't
can't hexpect to vin. Now, I'll bet any
tleman from a brownie to a bob as they
diskiver the little pea."

"Done!" cried one, touching a thimb

"*Non hest inwentus.* 'Though lost to
to memory dear!'" said the imitating Sar
thimble mocking-bird, pocketing the shill

"Try again, gentlemen ; I'll wager a
reign,—quite a good one, for I makes
home. But fair play's a jewel—no assis
I heard you wink just now."

The game was carried on for some tir
the evident discomfiture of the clods, an
only put an end to by the arrival of the
who had been despatched for Lady Athe
carriage.

"A pint of arf-and-arf, Sary," said he, addressing a red-headed, slip-shod wench, in slatternly disarray, who acted as the village Hebe, and presided over the spirituous liquor department; "a glass of arf-and-arf. I've had a sharpish ride, fifteen miles in an hour and a 'kevarter.'"

"Pretty sunshiny job!" said first turn-out, holding up both his hands; for be it known there is a road freemasonry by which drivers ascertain the gratuity given, each finger representing a shilling, and which at every stage is held up to warn the new driver.

"Yes, two fives; he's a trump is Mr. Ravensworth."

"What business has he here with another man's wife?" exclaimed Sarah, indignantly. "I heered talk of him; he's no better nor he should be."

"Never mind, Sary; vot's the odds so long as you're happy! Give me sixpennyworth of gin and bitters. Oh, never mind the measure,

if you've lost it; my mouth jist holds a gill!"

"Well, my mind is," replied Sarah, perseveringly, "as Mr. Ravensworth's an oudacious profligie; and Lord Atherley—but it sarves him right." Poor Sarah Speers, wanting yet the name of wife, had felt

"The weakness, painful and most pitiful,
By which a virtuous woman, in pure youth,
May be delivered to distress and shame."

She had been brought up in Lord Atherley's family; and, but for the little misfortune, might have ended her days in it. As it was at present, she was a mother and a spinster—all in one; doomed to drench human brutes, from the rising of the sun even unto the setting of the same!

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON:
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C O M P T O N A U D L E Y.

VOL. III.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

COMPTON AUDLEY;

OR,

HANDS NOT HEARTS.

BY LORD WILLIAM LENNOX.

The hands of old gave hearts;
But our new heraldry is — hands not hearts.
SHAKESPEARE.

Un tel hymen est l'enfer de ce monde.
VOLTAIRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON :
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.



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COMPTON AUDLEY.

CHAPTER I.

THEATRE AT Highbury Cross.

“All the world’s a stage.”

“The play’s the thing.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“Like wandering Arabs, shift from place to place
The strolling tribe.

• • • •
And fawning cringe, for wretched means of life,
To Madam Mayoress or his Worship’s wife.”

CHURCHILL.

A PETITION from Mr. Beverly Gagen was presented one morning to Lord Atherley, requesting his patronage at the theatre, Highbury Cross, the post-town; or begging he might be allowed to give “a taste of his quality” before the distinguished party assem-

bled at Compton Audley. Lord Atherley assented to the former, and the night arrived in due time.

The party from Compton Audley entered the theatre a few minutes before seven, and were received at the box entrance, which diverged and dived to the left to the pit, and up, on to the right, through a slim side door, to the gallery, by Mr. Beverly Gagen, the manager, in a light comedy dress, with two flaring "*fours*," stuck in a pair of white and gold stage candlesticks. Mrs. Beverly Gagen was ensconced in a small pigeon-hole sort of a box, a species of pillory on a pivot, or not unlike one of the wickets at an *hôpital des enfants trouvés* in France, ornamented on this occasion with artificial flowers and laurel leaves, and which, by the contrivance we have mentioned, enabled the manageress to take the money and tickets for boxes, pit, and gallery. According to the necessity, as the yachters say, " 'bout she goes!"

As Lady Atherley's party entered the stage box, which was gaudily decorated with theatrical flags and banners, festooned scrolls bearing the usual melo-dramatic sentiments, "He dies by sunrise!" "Spolatro is the murderer!!!!" and which the scene-painter, Mr. Smears, had in vain attempted to hide,—the band struck up "Rule Britannia," accompanied by the discord arising from a noisy gallery, the opening and shutting of the box-doors, and the vociferating voices of the manageress and the box-keeper, announcing the names of first and second company coming to their places. A theatre, like Grizzle's love, levels all distinctions,—

"Lords down to cellars bears,
And bids the brawny porter walk up stairs!"

or, according to Churchill,

"To clap or hiss all have an equal claim;
The cobbler and his lordship's right the same."

Some time elapsed before the curtain was

drawn up, during which the orchestra, (two fiddles, a flageolet, and a triangle,) played an overture, two symphonies, and a couple of country-dances, which were nearly drowned by the loud confusion of voices, of all tones and in all keys. "Nosey ! why don't you give your *ducks* a swim ?" this was addressed to the leader of the band, who appeared in a pair of somewhat soiled white duck trowsers— "Smith ! where *are* you ?" "Jerry,—Jem ! here, come up ! Lots of room ! Where's Sarah ?" "Porter, ale, or cider, ladies *and* gentlemen ! Choice fruit and bill of the play," accompanied by the uproar, of *cat-calling*, stamping, shouting, and hissing from the gallery. It was almost a London gallery.

At last the bell rang ; up went the curtain ; and the "new and romantic drama, of peculiar interest, entitled, Maldavina, the Bandit's Bride, or Murder, Mystery, and Madness !! !" commenced. Three banditti were discovered, plotting treason against their captain, the music

playing an accompaniment to the melo-dramatic action ; three sets of black snake curls all going at once !—Maldavina, the Bride, appeared on the rock, and, on seeing them, hides behind it. Sanguino, Carnagio, and Rapino make signs of defiance, draw their daggers, kneel, chorus oaths, and retire. Soft music,—and the heroine, crossing and recrossing rocks (made of slanting planks on barrels) to and fro, from the back of the stage advanced to the front. Before she had repeated the first line,

"The moon is up ; it is the dawn of night—
Ye stars, how bright ye shine!"

Miss Fitz-Annandale, (so the lady was called in the white satin playbill, trimmed with pink,) looked towards the stage box, exclaimed "Mr. Ravensworth ! 'tis he !" clasped her hands, beat her forehead, uttered a shriek, and fell, apparently lifeless, upon the stage.

"Brayvo !" cried a dozen voices from the gallery. "H'encore !"

Dudley thought he recognised the voice,—

the form.—his suspicions were a
Adeliza Euphemia Buffy was the
date Maldavina !

The curtain was lowered, the “
gence of a liberal public” was cl
few moments, during which per
attempt the life of the fair heroine.
will remember Miss Buffy of E
memory; her story is soon told.

Miss Buffy, after considerable
prevailed upon her mamma to :
to that east end of heaven upon
gate ! The party consisted of M
demoiselle Buffy, Mr. and Mrs.]
tress pawnbroker, of Poppin’s Co
don Without, and their seven p
deputy was a retailer of witticism
He remarked, “that the only wa
the young Pewtresses was to pickl
ally in the *briny* ocean !” a joke
used repeatedly, with unabated s
morning. the happy morning a

a regular, ponderous, rickety hackney-coach, of the old school, and a small taxed cart, of no school at all, and which on ordinary occasions carried out the goods to auctioneers, laden inside and out, drove up to the London Bridge Wharf. Out of them stepped the above-mentioned party attended by two maids of all work, with a most astounding number of packages. After some little time, occupied in wrangling with the coachman and watermen, the families, with their luggage, including trunks, work-boxes, bonnet-boxes, hat-boxes, parasols, umbrellas, and guitar-case, were safely stowed on board the steamer.

The bell rang ; the scene was one of bustle and confusion—porters hurrying, passengers shouting. The bell ceased ; the boat started.

No adventure of any importance occurred during the voyage, save the marked attentions of a mysterious Werter-looking man, enveloped in a military cloak, with military spurs, black ringlets, and huge eyes, to Miss Buffy. It is

true, he never spoke, but he was ever to assist her into the boat, to get her to fetch her parasol, to arrange her stool, and to perform a thousand other *soins*.

After a most propitious voyage the steamer "Magnet" reached its destination and the mysterious gentleman took off his hat, offered his hand to Miss Buffy, drew up a sigh, and in a tone "most music melancholy" whispered,—

"Sorceress, thou hast bewitched the Edgar! May those eyes, which have so fatal to his peace one day beam upon with the smile of satisfaction, and now from the misery love has plunged him into

The lady blushed and held down her head; Edgar, the mysterious, pressed his hand to his heart, pumped up another sigh, and vanished.

Fortunately for Miss Buffy, this scene passed unnoticed by the remainder of the party, who were busily occupied in

luggage. At least fifty cards were placed in Mrs. Deputy Pewtress's hands, of hotels lodgings with sea-views. One attracted Deputy's attention :—"BALLS, pawnbroker, smith, &c., Prospect House, Arabella sent. Private house. Lodgings to let with view,"—for he always had an eye to less, and differed with the proverb "that of a trade can never agree," that is—when tance of sixty miles separates them. That name reminds me, said Mrs. Pewtress, of that excellent epigram of Hook's.—

"It seems as if nature had curiously planned that men's names with their trades should agree : here 's Twining, the tea-man, who lives in the Strand, 'ould be wining if robbed of his T."

"Come along, my dear," said Mrs. Deputy, her better half would have his saying

BALLS, pawnbroker, silversmith, &c.'—ah ! good, nearly as good as Giblett, poultice, Alehouse, publican ; Truefit, wigmaker ;

Sweet, grocer;" mentioning a
and trades equally applicable
those days as in ours.

A truck was procured, a
boy (for the consideration c
nented to conduct the par
Arabella Crescent, named aft
treble golden man, consisted
dozen houses, decorated with
as if children's shoes of pa
fancifully introduced, with h
and green doors, and brass-pl
and a small strip of thin gr
with a pump, and two popla
consumption. There once
a sea-view, but the mania
been so great, that every b
terer who could scrape to
commence building, at once
"architect and builder," at
brick structures, mortgagin
fresh funds, and tiling in

the equitable loan raised on the second floor. Such was the case of "Hodsoll's-row," the name of some four unfinished affectations of houses, named after the architect, and which faced Arabella Crescent.

"Any children, Mrs. Balls?"

"Two boys and a girl," responded the Margate pawnbroker's wife.

"What, three golden balls!" exclaimed Mr. Pewtress.

Mrs. Balls did not take the joke.

"Sad thing, Mrs. Balls, that row of houses," said Mr. Deputy Pewtress.

"Why, yes," replied Mrs. Balls, "but there's a charming view from the attics, and some people get weary of a constant sea-view."

"That reminds me, Mrs. Balls, of a story that once happened to me," said the Deputy. "A fellow had the impudence to build a dead-wall up between my back windows in Cripplegate, and a charming view we had of the church-yard with a lime-tree. 'You've spoiled

my prospect,' said I. 'That'
said he. "Good, —warn't it,

Though the silversmith's wi
of the joke,—seeing the depu
herself laughed too ; and so pl
money-lender, that he at onc
the lodgings for one month cer

We will not stop to detail
amusements of the party in A
who devoted their time (as i
watering-places), to donkey-ri
reading, picking up shells and
ing names on the sands, visiti
patronizing the shilling loo tal
emphasis 2 out of 2, 3, 5, th
chances.

On the third morning our
while taking a stroll in the ga
in one hand and a well-thum
the other, 'Waldemar, or the V
chia'), was agreeably surprised
ance of a stranger. She hastily

looked, and discovered (extempore) the mysterious Edgar. He was standing with his arms folded, in the same cloak, repeating some lines to himself, and occasionally referring to a small manuscript. "How like Waldemar!" said Addy to herself, comparing the *real* with the *ideal* hero of her book. At that moment a damsel, with fat arms and red elbows, bellowed out—

"Please, Miss, breakfast is ready, and Mrs. Buffy says the tea will be spile't."

Miss Buffy waved her hand to Edgar, and looked unutterable things; that is, she stared and said nothing. Edgar threw his mantle in a Coriolanus fashion over his left arm,—drew a note from his pocket,—held it up,—kissed it in the way they stamp a penny-post letter, and deposited it under a brick in the open and unfinished window of one of the Hodsoll-row houses; then pressing his hand to his heart, he hastily departed, or, as Miss B. would have described it, "fled!"

"Miss Buffy," cried Mr. De "your Ma' insists upon you Adeliza with a palpitating [the summons. The meal was spattered.

"Why law! Addy, you don't shrimp, Addy, such beauties! we has taken away your appetite." ended, Adeliza dashed into her hurried to the uninhabited house nished;" removing the brick, she addressed to her in her own name tents ran as follow:—

"Ange de mes rêves! âme sœur rosée du ciel, soleil de mes jours! nuits! Oh! lady, let the sweet buds ripen to a beauteous flower! No word.—one half kind word to thy

The latter part was clear enough

aid of a French dictionary (the only mode of getting at the Margate meaning of Edgar's French,) the former was soon rendered equally so.

"The god of love, the archer boy, sly Cupid," (as Miss Buffy metaphorically described it in a letter to her cousin Tilda,) "had made considerable havoc on her heart,—had spread an air of pensive sadness o'er her brow,—and caused the pearly tear to glisten in her eyes." Every morning did she appear in the garden, and as regularly as she appeared the constant Edgar was at his post, depositing a note into the neat red brick letter-box, (making this Pyramus-and-Thisbe sort of love by means of a wall,) formed of three bricks and a slanter, in the manner children make sparrow traps. On one or two occasions they had exchanged words,—few, very few words; and one evening when the *amorosa* had returned late from the library, Edgar had so far forgotten his bashfulness as to

press her hand with his lips; nay, if the ~~true~~ th truth
is to be spoken, her fair brow. Still he ~~was~~
silent as to his views and his surname; Ad-
liza had heard that love was blind, her ide-
as appeared nearly dumb. Twice had she caught
a glimpse of her hero on horseback, mounted
on a prancing piebald horse. "What a noble
form!" Often too, after she had sought her
pillow, to dream of love and Edgar, her
thoughts were disturbed by a serenade, "Pretty
star of the night!" "Sleep thee, or wake
thee, lady fair!" In vain did the love-sick dam-
sel exert her best energies to ascertain the name
of her admirer; the letters breathed of love,
and as usual were made up of overstrained pro-
fessions, flimsy compliments, declarations *of*
his admiration for beauty and hatred of sordid
wealth; with a tirade against parental cruelty,
and an *olla podrida* of love in a cottage, roses,
eternal constancy, sun-flowers, Gretna Green,
and suicide! Every quotation—from Shake-
peare's

"Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar,
But never doubt I love!"

— to Byron's "The kiss dear maid thy lip has left," &c. had been employed. One letter, or rather scrap, gave Miss Buffy considerable trouble to understand or decipher. It ran as follows :

— " Ottocar will never wound the heart
that loves him !"

" THrice happy ZELIDA !"

" Death has no terrors for me ! — life has
no charms ! — see — see — see ! a warrior's weapon
frees a warrior's soul ! !

" *On — till end !*"

What could this mean ? Adeliza knew that all heroes were eccentric : " Ottocar and Zelida ! — a warrior's weapon !" could her Edgar contemplate self-destruction ? — the thought was madness. The month had now nearly

elapsed, and Miss Buffy had communicated the painful intelligence that the following Wednesday was to see her departure from Margate. But previous to that day events were doomed to occur, scarcely dreamed of by the gentle Adeliza. Edgar's letters had increased ; there was a double delivery in numbers and in tenderness (the unfurnished house was always furnished) ; he had ventured to hint at his hand and his fortune in one epistle teeming with lover's eyes and lover's sighs hearts and darts, Cupid's fire and fond desire ! Finally, he proposed an elopement pointing out that a cruel-hearted guardian would cut him off without a shilling (a difficult operation,) if he married without his consent ; but once married, his parent would, he was given to understand, relent.

We must now take our readers to the breakfast-table of the Arabella-crescent party, on the morning of the Saturday previous to their intended departure. Mrs. Buffy, the Pew-

tresses, and the children, were discussing a projected ramble on the sands, and Miss Buffy was counting the minutes that were to elapse before her dear Edgar appeared, when a finely decorated waggon, in which was a band of music, passed the Crescent.

"Oh, ma'am!" cried the maid-servant running in, almost breathless, "them gentlemen's the players; they begged I'd give you these bills, and said they hoped for your patronage.

The deputy took one about a yard and a quarter long, and read the following announcement:—

"MR. FITZ-ANNANDALE'S NIGHT;
CIRQUE OLYMPIQUE,
LONDON ROAD, MARGATE.

Mademoiselle Eugénie Briselair, from Paris, for one night only.

Extensive and unequalled Stud!
High-trained Steeds!!
Stupendous Elephant!!!
Fairy Ponies!!!!
Sagacious Palfreys!!!!

Monday the 22nd of July.

A new Equestrian, Dramatic, Military, and Chivalrous
Spectacle, called

‘OURMYAH AND KHOI;

‘OR THE LOST HEIR OF AZERBIDJAN?’

‘Mohammed Raim Mirza,’ by Mr. Fitz-Annandale.

In the course of the evening,
Vaulting, Tight-rope Dancing, Horsemanship.

‘The Courier of Naples,’ by Mr. Fitz-Annandale.

‘The Swiss Milkmaid,’ by Mademoiselle Eugénie Brisel
her first appearance.

To conclude with the last Comic and Grotesque
Extravaganza of

‘JOHNNY GILPIN.’

Full particulars in the Bills of the day.

Boxes Two Shillings, Pit One Shilling, Gallery Sixpence.

Tickets and Places to be had at the CIRCUS, and of Mr.
FITZ-ANNANDALE, at the Shakespeare’s Head, London
Road.”

“Law! what a treat it would be for the
children!” exclaimed Mrs. Buffy.

“So it would,” replied the deputy; “sup-
pose we all go; let’s see, four box tickets,
eight shillings; three children, half price;
three shillings — Hannah and Betsy in the

gallery—only twelve shillings I declare; suppose you step down, Mrs. B., and secure us the seats."

This was agreed to, and within a quarter of an hour the box sheet list announced, among other names, "Mrs. Buffy, two front rows."

Adeliza had kept her appointment with the faithful Edgar, trusting that woman's wit would assist her in elucidating the long-kept mystery; four o'clock came, and the happy pair were wandering through a narrow lane that led to the beach. Edgar pressed his suit, the damsel blushed, and proposed speaking to her ma'; at which the mysterious lover bit his lips, rolled his eyes, beat his breast, and declared "that he never would be dependent upon maternal tyranny! for weeks he had writhed under the torture of suspense. If she would not elope, farewell happiness, farewell life!"

We will not dwell upon his persuasions, for "a winning tongue had *he!*" When Miss

Buffy named the Monday's started, but recovering him a fitting occasion; entreated ness, and as the clock struck him at the usual rendezvous would be in waiting. She Edgar passionately burst forth now to die 'twere now to for I feel my soul hath he solute, that not another con succeeds in unknown fate!"

They parted—their vows halfly pledged. We pass over time—hours appeared years the Monday night approach been ordered at three precedent mother had wrapped up in cloaks and shawls, little pockets with oranges, gingerbread nuts, and the pa leave home, when Adeliza I room, her face bound up,

, excruciating pain with a toothach, and dared how impossible it was for her to leave house.

What a pity ! " exclaimed all.
Shall I stay with you," asked one of the d-natured little Pewtresses.

One ticket lost," grumbled Mrs. Buffy: ay — Mrs. Balls may want one ! Here, nah,—My compliments to Mrs. Balls, and her this box ticket ;—admits two into pit."

Iannah soon returned, with Mrs. B.'s duty, she would gladly avail herself of it.

Deduct two shillings from the bill, Mr. duty," said the prudent lady.

'oor Addy, after sundry injunctions to be careful of herself, to foment her mouth, bandage her face with flannel, &c., was, n a thousand other remedies had been gested, left to herself. How anxiously did hours pass ! eight o'clock came, then nine ; then she left the house, and found her im-

patient lover waiting in a chaise—a one-horse one; with a fluttering heart she entered it, and the pair eloped with beating hearts and a post-horse ticket.

The party returned from the Circus highly delighted with the performance. Miss Pewtress was full of the young courier, Mr. Fitz-Annandale; the children were repeating the clown's eccentricities, "Here's a white handkerchief, washed with black soap, and dried on a gridiron!" "Here's your garters, long and strong; two makes a pair!"

"Now, Mrs. Balls," said Mrs. Buffy, to the landlady as she entered, "please order up our bit of supper, that nice cold ham, and some treacle and bread for the children."

Mrs. Balls looked what Mrs. Buffy called, struck all of a heap.

"Bless me, Mrs. B., you look alarmed—what has happened?"

"Miss Buffy—oh!—don't ask me, ma'am!"
"What of Adeliza?"

"Oh, ma'am!"

"Not worse, I hope?"

"Worse than that, ma'am—she's gone!"

"Gone!" almost shrieked the agitated mother.

"Eloped!"

"Eloped?—with who?—how?—where?"

"Read, ma'am! read!" giving at the same time a small packet.

Mrs. Buffy hurriedly opened it; a letter from Adeliza! She glanced over its contents; it was the usual appeal to parental sympathy, and was full of regrets, sighs, hearts, and darts. A few lines from the hero of the flight accompanied it, signed Edgar Fitz-Annandale, urging forgiveness, and concluding with the Venetian ducal advice—

"To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,
Is the next way to draw new mischief on."

When the name of Fitz-Annandale appeared sudden light came across her mind. Could it

be?—the spangled man!—the play actor!—the horse-rider in flesh-coloured tights and satin jacket! On further inquiry it proved to be too true. Adeliza had eloped with the hero of the Circus.

No pains were spared to discover the fugitives, but all endeavours were unavailing. We cannot expose our readers to the rage of Mrs. Buffy when she discovered the object of her daughter's flight. The happy couple had escaped, with unchanged affection but with scarcely any other change, to Southend. On the following Sunday the congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Rochford, heard the banns published, for the first time, between Edgar Dale, bachelor, and Adeliza Euphemia Buffy, spinster; and in due time the latter was endowed with all the worldly goods and chattels of the far-famed Fitz-Annandale, consisting of—

One Turkish dress.

One red Hussar dress.

Two whips.

One pair yellow Hessian boots.
One pair buckskin ditto.
One pair flesh-coloured pantaloons.
Pair of wings.
One black Brutus.
Two pair of mustachios.
Hare's foot and pot of rouge.

Edgar Dale was the son of a respectable cotton-spinner at Manchester, and was apprenticed to a mercer in that town; and here we must digress for an instant to remark on the infringements that have lately been made upon the rights of women. The shops of haberdashers, mercers, and shawl dépôts, swarm with white cravats and young men, equally well starched, who fawn over silks and edgings "like a sick girl." Is it not truly disgusting to hear a dressed-up, ignorant coxcomb recommending a cap, dress, or any other article appertaining to the female toilet, and descanting, with ungrammatical nicety, on the fashions of the day? "This lace, ma'am, is very much wore; a beautiful article! We have sold a trete quantity. Nothing can exceed the ele-

gance of that worked canazou ; it is, indeed, accessively beautiful ! ladies *is* in ecstasies at it. These shawls come very cheap, and will be found uncommon comfortable."

At an early age Edgar Dale became passionately fond of horses, and in vain tried to persuade his parents to allow him to enlist into the cavalry. Edgar had a soul above cotton, and at the age of eighteen enlisted into the gallant 18th Hussars. The commanding officer, on discovering him to be under indentures, of course released him, and his father insisted on his becoming an *officer* in the counting-house, not in the camp. Heaven, however, "soon granted what his sire denied," for a troop of equestrians who were "witching the world of (Manchester) with noble horsemanship," had such an effect upon the young clerk's mind, that one fine night he decamped from his employer's house, having received the promise of an engagement if he would meet the company at Lancaster. Dale being considered too plebeian

name, he added a Fitzannan to it, and in less than a month was announced in the play bills "Master of the ring, Mr. Edgar Fitz-Annandale;" dressed out in a blue tunic, embroidered with silver, with Hessian boots, Spanish hat and feather, and a long elegant whip to trail in one continual round O, through saw-dust.

Dale now devoted himself to study, and ere two moons had passed over his head had appeared as the hero of an equestrian and dramatic spectacle. By dint of perseverance, he, ere long, united in his own person the following departments;—second tragedian,—light comedian,—heavy business, low comedian,—tenor and bass singer,—the Irishman and Scotchman,—prompter,—utterer of the thunder, lightning, and snow storms,—player of the big drum, and caller of the supernumeraries. The retirement of the principal tragedian gave Dale an opening; and being fortunate enough to make "a dead hit" in a suc-

cessful piece, his fame ran through the country. A most flattering engagement had been offered to him at Margate, and his good star made him fall in Miss Buffy's path, on his way to join it. His last benefit had enabled him to possess himself of a "two pound tenner frock-coat, made to order;" a military cloak, "two pounds two;" and a four and sixpenny gosamer.

Hearing that Miss Buffy was an only daughter, with prospects, Dale had devoted himself to her. Our readers will have divined that the French note which gave Miss Buffy so much trouble to translate was the production of the *première danseuse* Mademoiselle Eugénie Briselair; and the mysterious scrap of paper, his own part in the last scene of a melodrama. The honey or treacle moon passed off, as such cloying moons usually do; the bride was all smiles, the bridegroom all devotion,—when on the fifth week, and when the time of "lips though blooming must still be fed," was in full

once, a letter was placed in Mr. Fitz-Annandale's hands ; it was from Mr. Beverly Gagen, formerly property man in the Cirque Olympique, but who, having by the death of an uncle come into a small fortune, had started theatrical concern for himself. His offer was most liberal ; highest terms for Fitz-Annandale and his wife's services. We give it in his own words :—

'DEAR FITZ,

"We open at Fillongley on the 10th. Will you and Mrs. F. lead the business ? terms thirty-five shillings a week : the highest ever given. Two benefits clear after charges : 'An you love me, Hall,' send me a speedy answer.

"Thine evermore,

"While this machine is to him,

"JACK BEVERLY GAGEN.

"P. S. Mrs. G. had her benefit last night, such a 'bumper at parting !' eight pounds ten ; crowds sent from the doors. 'What think you of that, Master Brook ?'

" I have such a piece for the opening, yo
dog ! Such a part for you ! a dead hit ! lot
of fat ! Won't it bring 'em down. Kean would
give his ears for it. Won't you *coal* it ? "

After some little consideration the offer was accepted, and the Fillongley play-bills announced, for the opening night, "an historical production of pomp and splendour, introducing all the resources of the theatre, with splendid scenic effects, and one of the most numerous and select companies ever gathered within the walls of a theatre, including Miss Fitz-Annandale (dropping her marital title), her first appearance on any stage, and Mr. Fitz-Annandale, unquestionably the most talented tragedian of the day."

After two months at Fillongley the company had removed to Highbury Cross, and the accident we have alluded to took place. Miss Fitz-Annandale had discovered that in her profession there is as much acting necessary off

the stage as on it, in private as in public; and, hearing of the party assembled at Compton Audley, had determined to get up a *scena*. The mystery attached to her birth,—for she gave out that her parents moved in the highest society,—the notoriety of the elopement, had worked wonders in the circles she moved in; and as her benefit was shortly to take place, she thought that some little additional advantage would be gained by the mysterious feint, or faint, she had practised: and true it is, such was the effect produced. It was buzzed round the theatre that the heroine had formerly been intimate with the Atherleys! nay, even some ventured to hint that an attachment had existed between her and Ravensworth: there was a mystery attached to the elopement which none had dissolved, and when, after a short interval, the curtain drew up and found Miss Fitz-Annandale in an attitude of hope and fear, three rounds of applause and shouts that echoed welcomed her. With a handkerchief to

her eyes and her hand to her h
to the very ground ; the *fu*
Garlands and bouquets of ar
showered down from the upp
which, as is usual at small
was Mrs. Beverly Gagen's o
The audience sympathised
Annandale; men were anathe
ceivers, and the theatrical h
upon as an innocent martyr.

The Atherley party left
conclusion of the first piece;
felt a pang when Dudley's na
but the recollection of the v
across her mind, and the d
supper were enlivened by m
expense of the *ci-devant* A
Buffy.

CHAPTER II.

SPA HOUNDS.

We met ; 'twas in a crowd !

T. HAYNES BAYLY.

“THE covert of an English *rendezvous de chasse* has been christened not unaptly the *coffee-room*; there is scarcely a hunting county, in which the forthcoming deaths and marriages, politics and scandal, are elsewhere manufactured.” So says the talented authoress of “Mothers and Daughters;” and certainly upon the occasion to which we are about to allude, the truth of this observation was signally realised. It was on the day following the one we have referred to in our last chapter, that, to the delight of the water-drinking inhabitants of the

minacious town of Gorseington, the
were to meet within two miles of the S.
an early hour the pump-room was d-
the "Promenade" was cleared; the "i-
band" consisting of half a dozen vi-
musicians, dressed out in the town's
white coats, tastily turned up with
coloured lapels, and who, from this
of magnesia and rhubarb had obtain
admirable of - Dr. Gregory's mixture,
washing their sweetness upon a few pi-
focaccia leading their mistresses' obese
and tropical lapdogs, and on a few
fat and fusty, who, with their anti-M.
charges of Henrys, Willys, Frankys,
Tommys, Lettys, Carys, Fannys, Ann
left the sole tenants of the walk. The
of the ceremonies had doffed his pu-
his pump-room, and, with military spe-
erected his Rosinante. The medical
put their "pill-boxes" into requisition; w
the tax-gatherer had mounted his "qui-

a low under-duty one-horse four-wheel chaise, just to see the hounds throw off.

Soon after ten the road absolutely swarmed with pedestrians and equestrians, and not the least interesting feature of the scene was the motley character of the bipeds and quadrupeds; butchers, bakers, chimney-sweeps, ballad-singers, beggars, nursery-maids; landaus laden with sporting beauties, open flys freighted with old and young ladies; wheel chairs, with dyspeptic patients, drawn by bloated-looking two-legged animals; vehicles of every description, from my lord's coach and four with splendid outriders, to old Farmer Oakleigh's waggon, containing a dozen of his servants and labourers, were seen in succession;

"Buggy, whiskey, gig, or dog-cart, curricles, or tandem."

Horses of every sort and species attended; children on donkeys, little girls on dimity side-saddles. Everybody seemed determined to bring his own dog, "in case it could be

of any use :" there were bull-dogs, sheep-dog greyhounds, spaniels, terriers, mongrels, tuz spits, curs, and poodles; long-legged, short-legged, bandy-legged, long ears, cropped ears, bush-tails, dock-tails, bob-tails.

The general appearance resembled a fair stalls of ginger-pop, brandy-balls, hot pie were got up at a short notice, and trade promised to be brisk. The fixture, being so near the town, was not in great favour with the regular sportsmen, and the muster, therefore of red coats was very thin. A fox was, in fact, unkennelled, when, just at the verge of the cover, the young gentlemen of the "temple of learning," kept by the Reverend Nicodemus Lumney, M.A., who seemed determined to save the hounds the trouble of "catching the fox, and who looked upon the sport as "*for præterea nihil*," set up such a discordant yelling and screeching, that the consequence naturally was the field was robbed of a good run.

and poor reynard, in turning short back, was chopped in the cover.

We must now introduce our readers to a prominent group of sportsmen, or rather idlers, encircling a lady, who, from her love of the chace, had received the appellation of “the galloping goddess.” This presiding deity—Miss St. Leger—was, as usual, holding her court, and furnishing a *chronique scandaleuse* to a crowd of *gobemouches*. In early life she had figured as a Brighton *belle*; and now, at a certain, or rather uncertain age, acted as a hanger-on to the rich. Miss St. Leger owned to thirty, though it was shrewdly supposed that she must have chronicled many more summers. She was fast approaching that melancholy state called a *has been*. She unquestionably deserved the well-timed retort of the celebrated Voltaire, “Un sot lui disait, ‘Savez-vous bien que je n'ai que trente ans?’ ‘Je dois le savoir,’ répondit Voltaire, ‘car il y a plus de dix ans que vous me le

dites.’’ Being ‘‘ sole daughter’’ of her mother ‘‘ house and heart,’’ Mrs. St. Leger’s high and independent spirit never made her shrink from making many a bold stroke for a husband for her young Diana. She held her forth as an heiress, her sole anxiety being to obtain a *partie* for her that would redeem the fallen fortunes of her house. The most cunning tacticians will sometimes fail; so did Mrs. St. Leger. She had for twelve years manoeuvred without success. In vain had she invited half the *eligibles* in England to eat the Admiral’s venison and drink his claret; in vain had her daughter, who possessed the cameleon-like quality of adopting the very colour of the feelings she wished to enslave, talked politics with the politician, sporting with the sportsman, poetry with the poet; in vain had she sighed with the sentimental, laughed with the gay, been enthusiastic with the enthusiast, unassuming and retiring, or spirited, as it suited her plans and her persons. To her mortification, none of the

men *would* propose. One Captain, of the 24th native East India Company's service, against whose heart she had directed the full battery of her charms and graces, had ventured to sound the way, by gently hinting at love in a cottage being delightful, but that there must be some little safeguard against "poverty coming in at the door;" the result, however, was unsatisfactory, for, "on speaking to pa," it was soon ascertained that Miss St. Leger's only possession, by way of fortune, was her face; the Captain, therefore, sounded a retreat. For a time she enacted the forlorn and broken-hearted, wandered about alone, read sentimental books, wrote sentimental verses, apostrophised the moon, and warbled love ditties.

In due time Miss St. Leger recovered, and began to weave her web anew; but, unfortunately, our modern Penelope, unlike her ancient namesake, found that the webs that were woven after dinner were unravelled in the morning, when the claret had evaporated

and cool reflection came. One consolation even remained — she remembered that Ninon L'Enclos made a conquest at eighty years of age !

Miss St. Leger was popular among men; the secret charm by which she held ascendancy over them was by conforming to their humours, subscribing to their prejudices, follies, and caprices, and administering largely to their vanity. Above all, she succeeded by the patience with which she listened to the endless babble about themselves. Latterly, Miss St. Leger had devoted herself to the hunting Spas, and had come out as an Amazonian of the first class train. She was an intrepid rider, ever forward in the chace, and raved about field-sports, flying-leaps, ploughed acres, and scarlet coats; was ~~an~~ *fait* at driving, — always made a book on the Derby, — was a great politician, and excellent in canvassing at an election. In one word, she was a man in woman's guise:

—to use her own expression, “five feet eleven, without her shoes.” In her adoption of any pursuit, she always went *à l'outrance*, and it was now a sufficient recommendation that it was anti-feminine;—a loud voice, forward look, independent air, a smack of the whip, a slap on the shoulder, a noisy accost, were expedients employed by her to excite notoriety. She piqued herself upon saying and doing any thing and everything, perfectly reckless of the consequences. In addition to these qualities she possessed the venom of a disappointed spinster, and was the *caillette* of the neighbourhood.

This digression has led us from the subject. Miss St. Leger was now in her glory, and never more completely happy than on the occasion we have alluded to, when she found herself the principal object of attraction to those persons whose suffrages alone he coveted,—the *gentlemen*.

“Cold scent, I am afraid,—
But, Reynolds, where’s your si
see she’s in her carriage;—sh
after her aunt. *Her* motto “
Nothing. She was superior to
danger,—damped by no disappoint
checked by no difficulties,—for
example—she flew over hedge
Take care, sir, my mare has a
lashing out;”—addressing a d
gentleman beside her, who,
fashion, had received the bad
word. “Captain, how’s the
—not the worse for the *ear*
news at the Spa, Glanville?—d
told. So! Wyrill’s going to
I’m delighted; and yet, I do
I should be; poor fellow! I

Telline &c.

his sobriquet, *Percy vere*. But what say you to your immaculate beauty, Lady Atherley? Of course you have heard of *her es-capade*? bolted, gone off with Dudley Ravensworth. Poor Lord Atherley heard of it at feeding time: sad loss! — a dinner and a wife on the same day! They talk of a field-day. Ravensworth's a dead shot — I should like to be in at the death. But, hark! I hear a holloa! — gone, away! — forward! — no mistake! — Whoo! — whoo! — forward!" And away scampered the lady, hounds, horses, and riders, all mad together, — madder than any March hare that ever poacher confined in a wiry strait-waistcoat.

This conversation, so abruptly terminated by the "hullabaloo" that we have already alluded to, had met the quick ears of Mr. Lyall, the gentleman who did the *Mirror of Fashion and Sporting Intelligence* for the *Spa Inquisitor*, and who had collected infor-

mation enough to furnish an article for ~~the~~ forthcoming paper. His motto was,—however truly or not we leave to our readers—

“ Imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis.”
CICERO.

We give a specimen of his paper, by culling a few beauties of refined composition from this weekly wonder of the Spa world. In attacking a cotemporary, he says, “ Dull, despicable, and disgusting, in the details;” and is it not a fine alliteration after the manner of

“ Lo! from Lemnos, limping lamely lags the lowly Ion.”

We have afterwards, well *mosaica'd* in an article against the *Spa Dispatch*, the following spirited phrases:—“A Literary Shoplifter.” —“ This panderism to a venal press is a notorious and unalterably detestable and maddening manifesto of blasphemous and brutal rebellion.” Again—“ This horrible weekly vomiter of daring depravity creates a sickly

excitement to robbery, cheating, and every specious species of malignant villainy; florid with audacious impiety, this infidel newspaper revels in atheistic democracy, and wantons in uncertificated defiance over the precious preserves of public decency, blazing with both barrels of blasphemy and hate at our holy institutions, and bringing down all that is sacred and dear to us, right and left. His profanity we can pardon, because it is mingled with his muddy heart's blood; but his bitter, incessant, and flagrant outrages upon the Town Council and the Spa Vestry call up at once our boiling indignation, unbridled horror, and unrestrained vengeance."

The article on the elopement we reserve for another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

BALL AT COMPTON AUDLEY.

"Why, is it not provoking? There, had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements! So becoming a disguise! So amiable a ladder of ropes! Conscious moon — four horses — Scotch parson — with such paragraphs in the newspapers. Oh, I shall die with disappointment!"

SHERIDAN'S *Rivals*.

SELDOM had a long-projected *fête* been so fortunate in weather as Lady Atherley's first *déjeuner dansant*. No expense and no pains had been spared to render this long-projected entertainment splendid and elegant; it was to begin with a concert, which was to be followed by a *déjeuner à la fourchette*, and succeeded by a

all. A military band was stationed on the lawn, marquees and tents interposed their gay stripes among the green thickets and shrubberies. In the evening the house and gardens were gaily illuminated ; large beacon-fires blazed on the hills, shedding a red and lurid light on the surrounding woods. The dance commenced, the enlivening sounds of music fell joyously on every ear,

“And all went merry as a marriage bell !”

At midnight the lights were taken from the windows to give more effect to a display of fireworks, which a celebrated “pyrotechnist, from the Royal Gardens, Vauxhall,” had been engaged to exhibit.

The entrance-hall was metamorphosed into a garden of rare and costly exotics ; sparkling lamps of every colour seemed dancing among the trees and shrubs, through which an avenue was formed that led to the foot of the grand staircase.

The principal gallery was converted into a most superb temple, and ended in a temporary room, which was appropriated to the votaries of Terpsichore. The scene here seemed actually the work of enchantment—it was one blaze of splendour! The first artists of the day had been employed in decorating the room in the *François premier* style. Mirrors of immense size reflected back the dazzling splendours of an hundred brilliantly-illuminated chandeliers. The whole of the rooms on the ground-floor were thrown into one, and formed the supper-room; the tables were covered with services of gold and silver plate, containing every luxury which fancy could suggest or princely opulence procure. The *fête* passed *à fêtes* are wont to do; every one wore the face of pleasure, and a very few were really pleased. We must here give our readers a full, true, and particular account of an event which took place at this ball, and which attached some little scandal to Miss St. Leger.

One of her humblest of slaves was a gallant young penniless Ensign of a regiment of the line, whose face was his fortune, and who had for some months, to vary the monotony of country quarters, bestowed upon her the greatest share of his regimental attention. One eventful evening, whether by love, liquor, or the hopes of lucre (for Miss St. Leger gave out that she was an heiress), Ensign Gustavus Battersby had been so far carried away by his passion as to propose an elopement. The lady blushed, hesitated, and urged the enamoured flagbearer "to speak to papa." This was declared to be impossible ; for, should the affair be made known to his own family, he would not only be disinherited, but measures would be taken to prevent his union.

" Farewell, then ;—

" 'Twas ever thus, from childhood's hour,
I've seen my fondest hopes decay !'

ighed Gustavus, turning up his eyes in the

true sentimental style; “but you will be happy, and no matter what becomes of me!”

“Oh, don’t say so! don’t say so!” exclaimed Miss St. Leger, taking out her most elaborately worked white cambric pocket-handkerchief, trimmed with lace edging, and shedding a few tears.

“What is the matter, dear Diana?” asked the Ensign. “What is the matter?”

“Oh! oh! I—am—so—miserable!”

“Miserable! what have I said to make you so?” tenderly replied the youth.

“Cruel, unfeeling! — how can you ask me? — how can you show so little sympathy, so little sensibility? My peace of mind is gone for ever!” sighed Miss Diana.

“Now do, dear, be comforted! my love, my passion, will yield to neither years nor sorrow; time may soften it, but remembrance will hallow it. Be comforted; — I shall be forgotten; another more worthy will take my place.”

“Never! never! never! I am miserable,

wretched, distracted!" exclaimed the frantic young lady. "I shall be alone unpitied!" Here she gave a shriek as if she had undergone a fresh accession of agony, threw herself upon a sofa, and forthwith went into violent hysterics.

The Ensign fanned her, and as she recovered she heard a soft and silvery tone whisper, "Fly, then, to my arms, mine own;—

"I'll prove myself thy lover against the world in arms!"
together let us glide down the stream of life,
regardless of the frowns of fate or fortune."

The lady blushed more deeply, and faltered forth, in accents of kindly reproach, her fears of the consequences of a runaway match. The gallant subaltern renewed his attack with energy, and, after administering a potent portion of "soft sawder," on the principle of the Italian proverb, "Si prendono piu mosche col mele che coll'aceto," and which honied voice of flattery sweetly fell upon the ears of the now deliberating damsel, it was finally arranged

that at the Compton
ment should take plac

The Ensign, true to
chaise ready in the pa
the appointed time: in
cloak, with another on
rata, he stationed him
attached to the conse
logs of wood, flower-pa
rakes, and other imple
love-sick swain anxious
of his promised partn
servatory opened into t

The clock chimed ele
passed; the Ensign in
breathless trepidation,
heard a step, and cauti
place approached the
of footsteps increased;
turning in danger, he o
sense presented itself to
tion. The temporary r

conservatory with the ball-room was in flames; sparks were flying about in all directions,—a few of the guests, assisted by the servants, were tearing away the draperies and endeavouring to stay the progress of the fire. In the farthest extremity of the conservatory Miss St. Leger was in a fit of hysterics, under the care of an abigail (her partner in the dance having with the true masculine dread of a *scene* left her under the pretext of getting a glass of water); loud were her sobs, they touched the Ensign's heart. As she perceived him the fit was most vehemently increased; hartshorn, salvolatile, smelling-salts were applied in vain. The daring sub.'s first thought was to rush forward and offer his assistance to the fainting fair one; when the entrance of Lord Atherley's steward, attended by a *posse comitatus*, giving instructions to search the premises for the incendiary, made him sound a precipitate retreat. Miss St. Leger gave a piercing shriek, such a one, that Velluti, had he heard it, would have died

of mortification at the thought that she could pitch a note an octave higher than he could.

The Ensign made a signal, Miss St. Leger would have followed had not the arrival of two engines impeded her progress; she made the attempt, and received the shock of water. The gentle Niobe, all tears, was now a second Ondine.

But we must return to the hero of the night's adventure, who, the moment he heard the gathering fury of the element and the threats of the constables, darted off in double quick time, followed by two Bow-street officers, who had been expressly engaged to superintend the arrangement of the *fête*: for in those days policemen had not even a prospective existence. Now these worthies, Messrs. Gribble and Cocksedge, were of a race that flourished some twenty years ago,—in these days totally extinct. The former was bulky in figure, ruddy in countenance, knowing in physiognomy: the latter was thin, gaunt, and shrivelled; they

neither in running condition : Gribble
d like a grampus, and realised Byron's
tiful image—"heavy and slow, like the
drops of a thunder shower!" while Cock-
s looked like an odd volume of *Swift's*
s. Before they had reached the first lodge,
gave evident signs of what the sporting
papers call "shutting up," and were fairly
ed for want of breath. At this moment
unning was taken up by two sturdy young
keepers, who, hearing the cry "Stop
!" lost no time in joining the chase ; but
oung soldier's metal was up, and for some
he outran his pursuers. "He's a game
" cried one ; "he deserves to escape."
oroa ! we have him now," replied the other ;
makes for the sunk fence, when he finds
fail, he'll make for the gate. I'll double
now."

Gently, Dick, fair play's a jewel, give the
devil a chance ; why, there's ne'er a grey-
d in my Lord's kennel as would do that ;

a chain had fastened it up. Had he been here for this he would have got off with a few stripes and colours, though whether such a punishment would have satisfied the master I do not know; but as it was, he became a subaltern our readers will be pleased to observe, and I hope mine.

Meanwhile the constabulary force had returned to the house, and were looking about in the servants' hall, giving a somewhat exaggerated account of the pursuit to the pious-looking obtuse bumpkins who were the domestics. "Sitch a gang, I never seen like 'em before," said Gribble; "three reglar crahsmen for a gang! I cotched one by the scuff of his coat-sleeve, and told him to stop, and he wouldn't, cos as how he warn't thinking of him as we seed in the summer ouside."

"I had two upon me at once,

my-care fellows, I never met ; the one with the red choker round his squeeze was, I rather think, Paddington Jem, under sentence of eighty-four months, jist escaped from the bulks."—"Well, it 's a mercy we wern't both shot, for all three were reglarly armed," repeated both together.

At this moment any further expression of their prowess was put an end to by the announcement made by a tittering still-room maid, "that one of the prisoners was taken!"

"Aye, I thought I had maimed him!" said Gribble exultingly; "I knew he could not get far. But where 's Mr. Springett?"—the name of the county Dogberry. "Let 's do things in a rigilar way, and no mistake!"

The old though somewhat profane proverb of talking of a certain ugly sprite, &c., was realised by the entrance of Mr. Springett himself; he was a bustling, active, little man, who asked fifty questions without taking breath, or a reply.

"Where's the prisoner?—who took him?—what's his name?—where was he found lurking?"

"Please your honour! Mr. Springett," said Gribble, (who had a high respect for the *paid* authorities, and bowing as low as his corpulence would permit,) "my partner Cocksedge and I received information as there was a hang-dog looking fellow with two or three pals a-prowling about the premises. Well, the ringleader,—but here he is to answer for himself." The gaping servants, who with "greedy ears" were "devouring up" the Loudoner's recital, made way for the unfortunate prisoner; who, with his arms pinioned, was ushered into the room, under the custody of the two gamekeepers, bearing trophies of victory, the now torn cloak that the providence of the young officer had provided for his fair mistress. As true chroniclers, we are bound to say the hero of the night's adventure cut but a sorry figure; his clothes were sullied and his face

was scratched. Mr. Springett was now in his glory, and began with wonderful volubility to interrogate the prisoner and witnesses.

"What's your name, young man, place of abode, and profession? — what brought you into the county? — what are your associates' names? When did you return from transportation? Young men, (addressing himself to the gamekeepers,) you may give up your charge; your activity shall be reported to the proper *authorities*. Messrs. Gribble and Cock-sedge, most active and zealous officers, will see the prisoner properly secured."

"Butler, is there a strong room, a cellar, or coal-hole, that will answer as a place of confinement for the night? in the morning we will take him before the bench." A private conversation as to the security of sundry cellars was being carried on between the butler and the head-constable, in a low tone, which gave the Ensign an opportunity of turning to Mr. Gribble, (who had

now unpinioned his arms,) and making use of one of his hands he inserted a guinea in the palm of the Bow-street functionary,— addin~~g~~, in a side voice, “ I can afford to pay for good lodging ; it shall be doubled in the morning.”

“ All right, I ’m up, a riglar flash on—right as the mail !” said Mr. Gribble aside, giving a knowing significant wink. Mr. Springett sat swelling and fuming official dignity, and in a stentorian voice cried “ silence ! ” (echoed by the next in command) “ silence in the court ! handcuff the prisoner,—see him safely locked up in the coal-cellar,—in the morning we ’ll take him before the worshipful bench.”

“ Ax your pardon for the hinterrupshin,” said Mr. Gribble ; “ but p’raps you ’ll allow me to make one remark. It ’s not for me to dictate to a man of your experience, Mr. Springett, but you ’ll excuse me if I say, as we haue werry strict orders from our worthy and re-

spectable magistrate at Bow Street, never on no account *whatsumever* to take bail, or lose sight of a prisoner, suspected of murder, highway robbery, or h'arson. Now, as the young man is accused of the latter, by your leave, my partner and I,—if so be as you gives him in charge to us,—will sit up with him all night ; for tho' the dooty I may say has been werry ardoos to-day, our time's the public's, and in sitch cases we are willing to sacrifice our personal comfits."

Mr. Springett was delighted to see so much zeal and public spirit displayed, and, after arranging with the steward, it was finally agreed that the prisoner and his guardians should pass the night together in mutual custody. Mr. Gribble having so far succeeded in his plans, and being anxious that no one should suspect his connivance with the prisoner, with whom he expected (to adopt his own phraseology) to have a *sunshiny* job, now thought it necessary to give vent to the following

anathemas:—"I knew he good,—he's a riglar harden him right if they hang him; fellows like inions, twenty lucky Lord Atherley sent t Bow-street authorities, he'd h premerses burnt if he hadn't affair. I'll catch the othe morrow night, or my name a ble."

During this harangue the headed by the steward, wen considerable difficulty, up a s of stairs, of which they gained the same moment Mr. Gribbl a termination. Throwing o dately in front of them, ushered into a small and fee Though nearly devoid of t fire which blazed upon the air of comfort; while a cou a table well supplied with jug

ipes, and tobacco, showed that the constabulatory had taken provident care that their "creature comforts" should not be neglected. Mr. Gribble having secured the door took his colleague aside, and after a few minutes' private conversation, in which the words "riglar rump! quite the right sort!" escaped his lips, returned to the table; and after requesting the gentleman would take one of the arm-chairs and make himself at home, quietly seated himself in the other, lit his pipe, and making a sign to Mr. Cocksedge to take possession of a wooden coal-box, and do the same,—the two worthies

————— " Undisturbed by state affairs,
Moistened their clay, and puffed away their cares,"

until they both fell off in a sound sleep. There,—wishing them "rosy dreams and slumbers light," will we leave them, and return to our persecuted hero, who, weary and drowsy with the day's fatigue, soon dropped quietly

to sleep in the comforta
he had ensconced himse
in the arms of Morpheu

"Dreams which mock

visited him; he dream
Green,—the blacksmi
o'er the spirit of his d
cry of fire;—the buildin
visitors ran from room
incendiary!" was the cri
the harpies of the law
came daring, — despera
they grappled him by th
on the head!" shouted o
another: down they all
upon horror accumulat
— a loud rumbling no
this moment the great C
a yawn, a shiver, rubb
his scattered senses, lo
and found all had bee

The guardians of the night still slept, and apparently profoundly. The denseness of the atmosphere of the low-roofed room, the fumes of the tobacco, were so offensive and overpowering, that the Ensign, feverish and excited, rose hastily, and threw open the casement window. The noise of this movement awoke the vigilance of Mr. Gribble:—

“What, trying to escape! Here’s a riglar cracksman,” said the vigilant sleeper, starting up, and seizing the prisoner by the throat.
“Here, Cocksedge! Cocksedge!”

The Ensign assured him that he had no intention of attempting to escape, (the window, we must here remark, was at least eighty feet from the ground,) and, placing another guinea into his hand, thanked him for his night’s lodging.

“Vy, your honour,” said Gribble, pocketing the money (for even Bow-street officers are, or rather were, *not* immaculate, and are or were great worshippers at the shrine of Mammon);

ve halways vishes to hact like gentlemen to gentlemen who hact as sitch; ‘andsome andsome does,’ is our motto.”

The tread of a heavy foot upon the gave symptoms of the approach of some comer, and in a moment more, after a knocking, the door was thrown violently and in stalked no less a person than Springett himself, with a request that prisoner might immediately be brought to Lord Atherley, in his own room. This an end to all further conversation.

The prisoner now requested a few words of private conversation with the noble owner Compton Audley, which was granted. He then gave so open and ingenuous a statement of the whole transaction, that commiseration little tinged with mirth, was felt for the bold warrior, who had been so carefully and so attentively “cabinned, cribbed, confined.” Our hero’s regiment was shortly afterwards ordered to India, where he escaped all

rors of that pestilential clime, and may, what we know to the contrary, be seenily, about three o'clock, enjoying a tiffin at great nabobery in Hanover Square.

The above affair would have remained as ret as the grave, had it not been for the st-boy, who, getting extremely impatient at waiting job, made enquiries at the house for sign Battersby. No such person was at the l. This led to an inquiry; one question followed another, until a small bundle, which, e the Hon. Mr. Dowlas's luggage, was tied in the honourable lady's pocket-handkerchief, and a pair of cloth travelling boots, rked "Diana St. Leger," gave a clue to party.

From that time the wags of the county never letted an opportunity of indulging their th at the fair spinster's expense. We must, considering the ferocity of fire and the erities of water, she had a right "to tax elements with unkindness!"

heart not very uncommon, and deser:
couplet :—

“Indeed, to take our haberdasher’s hints,
You might have written over it ‘From

CHAPTER IV.

HIGHBURY CROSS FAIR.

“ ‘Tis fair time,—aye, and more than that.”

BLOOMFIELD.

“ Lords, ladies, knights, and damsels, *gent,
Were heaped together with the vulgar sort
And mingled with the raskall rablement,
Without respect of person or of port.”

SPENSER.

Few country towns of any eminence were at this period without their annual fair ; and that of Highbury Cross ranked as one of no mean ~~unimportant~~ order. The aristocracy of the country,—the squire and his family,—the far-

* Gent.—Courteous or free, noble.—*Glossary to Spenser's Poems.*

mers with their wives, sweethearts, sons and daughters; the cottagers all in their holiday array, flocked to this annual meeting or mart, to buy, to sell, or see. It was a period to which the rural people looked forward as one of relaxation from servitude and of mutual rejoicing. It was a time for the exchange of hospitalities, for cultivating the kindest affections—cementing family ties, renewing simple friendships, and disposing of stock! The hearts of the old, of the parents and grandparents, were warmed by retracing “the light of other days,” looking forward to seeing their children and grand-children “hearty and well.” To the young it was a time devoted to pleasure-taking, present-making, flirtation, and youthful pastime. True indeed was this country scene; the village bells were ringing, and troops of youths and maidens, dressed in their Sunday gear, crowded together; simple and glad creatures! A spirit of delight was diffused over this rural holiday; dances on the green, wrestling, run-

ring and leaping, quoits, skittles, nine-pins, cricket, had usurped the place of the savage and brutal sports of boxing, bull-baiting, bear-baiting, dog-fighting, and cock-fighting. And what a contrast was this unalloyed scene of rural and peaceful enjoyment, to that brutal debasement of human nature so often exhibited in the riot and drunkenness of an English fair.

The spirit of the times is however changed. The once merry mart has now dwindled into an idle, unmeaning, squabbling village holiday ; politics and beer-shops swallow up the hours formerly devoted to English sports and pastimes ; and the sun goes down upon strife and every species of dissipation ! The numerous tippling houses that have sprung up under the New Beer Bill, have done more injury to the morals of the people than any other legislative measure that has passed the Houses of Parliament for the last hundred years. The measure has introduced to active life all the evils of licensed public-houses, without having the check of the

magistracy; the temptations of drink to the poor man have been multiplied,—their baneful tendency has been deeply felt by the wives and children of labourers, who know that they abstract that portion of the wages that ought to go to the maintenance of the family. The principal argument in favour of the Bill was, that the proprietors of the new beer-shops would brew their own beer and produce a wholesome and cheap beverage. But what are the facts in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, nay, in nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand; the liquor, wretched in its first state, is supplied by the brewer who started the house, and by the pauper landlord, and afterwards adulterated by the retailer. With no wish to diminish the real comforts of the labouring classes, or to deprive them of a wholesome beverage, still less to drive them to become the victims of the foul propensity of drinking ardent spirits, we must protest against the introduction of the new private class of alehouses.

A learned judge from the bench, had said, "that he really believed that half the crimes which had been committed since the establishment of the beer-shops, had their origin *in them*." Let any but enter one, and see how often the notice outside, "licensed to be *drunk* on the premises," is practically illustrated within.

We have digressed (a fault we have had but too often to admit); we now resume the thread of our narrative. Rumour, with her many-hundred tongues, had penetrated into the recesses of Compton Audley. It spoke of Lady Atherley's fatal charms,—of the misery of her domestic life,—of Dudley Ravensworth's devotion—of a mysterious disappearance from a hunting field; at first this latter affair appeared to have little effect upon Lord Atherley, but the dropping of water wears decay in stones (the proverb is somewhat musty), and his ears were continually assailed with it. It was on the morning of the mart that Lord Atherley, suffering under slight symptoms of a

fit of gout which rende
able, appeared late :
— What, no letters? no
tearly: at the very mom
the post-bag, and
With much importance I
bore the letters accordin
— Humph! humph!
“ more petitions, more
what’s this?” said he,
dirty, mis-shapen, queerl
in a very crooked smi
noble disdain of orthog
lump of wax, impressed
— the application of wh
a sixpence. It was an
over flattering to his f
his blindness with respe
his wife.

It was impossible to
moment to revive Lord
of his wife than the prese

bands are notoriously the last who become aware of ill-natured reports respecting their wives, he had, on the last day's hunting, found himself the object of the remarks of his country neighbours. Throwing the hateful letter into the fire, fixing his eyes upon Lady Atherley, and bursting into a loud convulsive laugh, he tried to distract his thoughts by looking over the county paper, but here he was, alas ! equally unfortunate.

"Hum ! hum !" said his Lordship, running his eye over the columns of the paper, "'Elopement in High Life,' we 'll keep that for a *bonne bouche*. Let 's see, funds at ninety-seven. Police news,—contested mayoralty,—fashionable arrivals,—Dutch papers,—horrid murder,—shocking suicide,—accident at sea,—marriage in high life,—deaths,—poor Lady Johnson's dead ! — London Gazette,—Lord Norbury's last—theatrical intelligence,—soothing sirup ; Well, well."

"But the elopement ?" lisped Priddie. A

twinge made the noble Lord throw down the paper, when Priddie took it up, and read the following paragraphs :

“ ELOPEMENT IN HIGH LIFE.

“ AN elopement has taken place ; the parties are the lady of a rich nobleman, residing not a hundred miles from C—— A——, and the second son of a baronet, M.P. for the borough of R-t—gh. One rumour states that the lady escaped in male attire, and that the guilty pair are on the road to the Continent; another, that a duel has taken place, in which the injured husband has been severely wounded. Though we possess ample particulars of this painful transaction, delicacy forbids us to say more at present ; and we abstain from entering fully into it, as the affair will doubtless become a subject of judicial inquiry, and furnish employment for the gentlemen of the long robe.”

"DISTRESSING OCCURRENCE IN HIGH LIFE.

"AN unexpected event of a peculiarly painful description, has recently occurred, which has created a great sensation in this and the adjoining county; and, as contradictory rumours are afloat, we should think ourselves wanting in our duty to our readers, if we were not to lay before them the authentic facts of the case. The parties are a nobleman of sporting and gastronomic celebrity, his lady, and an honourable M.P. The extraordinary attractions of Lady A—, her unrivalled grace, the sweetness of her manner, have often been the theme of admiration in the county, in the gaieties of which she often partook. The friends of the parties had been for some time apprehensive that the harmony of their domestic intercourse was not uninterrupted. No idea, however, had been formed of the extent of the estrangement, until last Wednesday.

On that day Lord A-hunting, was informed, also partaken of that of the honourable senat home; but no idea was nature of her absence, horses came back into proved upon inquiry, th left the hunting field Esq., and had been obse the Dun Cow, Highbury C

“ We add with the deepe from the accounts that ha is but too much reason to tempts to effect a reconc unavailing.”

Lady Atherley turned de white. Lord Atherley, wil soliloquised nearly as follow the dress !—like—

time in seeing Ferretson ; action ! damages !” An awful silence ensued, which was interrupted by the butler entering to inquire whether the carriages and horses were to come round. “ Oh yes ; in half an hour,” replied Lord Atherley. “ I must see Ferretson ; besides, we must not stay away from the fair. No, no,— colour to the report, colour to the report. Dudley, I’ll take you in the phaeton.” Ravensworth pleaded letter-writing, but was overruled.

“ You must come ! — must come — must come ! ”

As soon as the carriages were ready the party issued forth ; and, after traversing the country very ostentatiously for about five miles, reached the town of Highbury Cross. The fair was at its full. Leaving their equipages at the Bell and Crown they proceeded to the market-place, which was one dense mass of moving people, and unintermitting noise and din—gongs sounding, cymbals clashing, men

90 COMPTON AT

leaving, women screaming.
We will not attempt to par-
or humours of it. There's
her of dwarfs and giants,
and wonders. Wombwell's
domestic, untameable anim-
Company of comedians. B-
prise-fighters, cudgel-player
beasts. Barcelona nuts, no
Then there were donkey-i-
up-and-downs, merry-go-
rounds horse-collars for t-
with striped tails, wheelba-
sketed, running for linen, ju-
eating toast and treacle, th-
hind them, ed-divers, sc-
ding eaters, climbing slimy
all prizes and no blanks, shy
and snuff-boxes. Booths wi-
of carts, trumpets, drums, d-
lace. Lollipops abounded; all
scullers, beggars, gipsies, si-

One man, opulent in a loud stentorian voice, seemed to attract the attention of all the gaping multitude. "All for one halfpenny: a full, true, and perticklar account of the late he-lopement of Lady Ha—— with Mr. R——, the h-independent member for the town of R——h, with portraits of the habove, and a full-length likeness of the disconsolate *usband*. Vere's the lady or gentleman vot would be without sitch a work if they can get it for a 'penny." Amidst the din and clamour, Lord Atherley providentially did not get at the nature of the peripatetic bookseller's publication, but as the crowd drew back "to make room for the quality," his eyes caught the placard. However unartistical the execution of the portraits might be, there could be no mistaking their application, for underneath were printed in large red letters—"Crim. Con. D—— R——, Esq., M. P., and Lady A——. Damages laid at two thousand pounds. All the correspondence!" Lord Atherley shrank back

without the crowd, and wit
a paralysed and lightning-s
that moment a woman, dressed
vulgar and outrageous finery
actress or a maniac, made h
wretched Lord.

“ How d’ ye like that—how
old man? I told you Sarah Si
be put upon by the like of yo
your forehead ; there’s not a de
park better antlered,” suiting
the word, putting her finger
decidedly *cornute* shape, and
and mocking, amidst the laugh
of the amused multitude. To
in Dante’s beautiful episode of C

“ — I the *fair* that day,
They read no more.”

CHAPTER V.

RETURN TO LONDON.

"Les personnes qui vont là pour voir sont bien moins nombreuses que celles qui vont pour être vues."

L'ermite de la Chaussée D'Antin.

THE country was no longer endurable to Lord Atherley, it had also lost all charms for Constance; and sudden was the departure of the disturbed pair for town, the only place in which scandal has an insufficiency of space, and where the excitement of life prevents its rumours from lingering long on the memory. Ravensworth was in London within a very few days after the arrival of the Atherleys, and was almost immediately in the receipt of a cold, moody, and formal note from Lord

Atherley, intimating a decided wish that the calls of Dudley should cease. The cherished intimacy of years must henceforth be broken up; and Dudley and Constance must endeavour to pass each other in the varying scenes of a London life, with all the iced serenity of fashionable acquaintance. The following evening, as Ravensworth sat enjoying the rare pleasure of solitude in his opera-box,—which was usually crowded with that large class of the community, who are called, *par excellence*, “young men about town,” and who amidst the most divine strains keep up a running accompaniment of the gossip of the day, he was startled by the entrance of the Honourable Augustus Priddie.

“ Anything new to-night?” he demanded, after the usual forms of civility and apology for intruding had been gone through.

“ Nothing that I am aware of,” replied D-

ley.

“ I dined at White’s,” lisped the exqui-

"Brummel was to have dined there, but he threw it over :" then shrugging his shoulders, and staring round the house, added "Why there is positively *nobody* here to-night!"

Ravensworth turned his attention to the stage: at that moment the house, a crowded one, was hushed to silence, to listen to that splendid scene of Pasta in Semiramide ; those wonderful powers that blended the most exquisite tones of melody with the fiercest agitations of passion,—and which delighted the ears, as they shook the very soul of the listeners. Abruptly, in the midst of one of the most thrilling passages, Priddie quietly asked "Whether he had seen the Atherleys lately?" Dudley paused for a moment ere he ventured to reply. "Lady Atherley has been unwell; Atherley has lent his box for the remainder of the season," was his tardy answer.

"How strange!" replied Priddie; "'pon my soul that Atherley's an odd fellow, for he told me in the park he was coming; take a pinch,

its Brummel's best," offering a richly-chased snuff-box.

"Thank you, no!" replied Ravensworth, with a short dry cough.

"Of course you dine with Atherley on the 10th?"

"No, I'm engaged to the Sullivans."

"The Sullivans! oh Cielo!" cried Priddi with an air of the most ineffable disgust; "how can you encounter those Irish stews? cold soup, hot wine, only sherry and port; port, decoction of log-wood, cochineal, and spirits of wine,— why your hostess will talk you into a fever in five minutes."

Ravensworth paid no attention to these remarks; his opera-glass was fixed upon the opposite box, which Lord and Lady Atherley and Mr. Darval had just entered. "How exquisitely Pasta sings to-night."

"Very!" was Dudley's laconic answer. A with that pertinacity with which genuine be always bestow their tedious remarks, espec

at moments when most unwelcome, the unabashed exquisite continued ; “ Ah, how *insouciant* William Ferrers looks with *la belle Caroline* ! only think, Sidney appearing *en evidence* with St. Ange ; how handsome Lady Atherley *is looking !* ” fixing his eyes on the opposite box, “ and how wonderfully well Darval is getting on with her ; he is a man to be envied ! I thought she would be here,—what an accommodating *sposo* she has ; he is leaving the box, whilst the lady, nothing loth, permits the *inamorato* to hang over her chair ! ”

Dudley’s attention thus directed to the spot, he fancied that, after Lord Atherley’s departure, Darval paid additional attention to Lady Atherley ; he saw too plainly that he was at the back of her chair ; he saw her apparently engrossing his attention.

“ What a wonderful flow of conversation Darval has ! he comes, he sees, he conquers. ‘ Ven. Vid. Vi.’ as the short-hand of the commentary gentleman has it. Are you going to

Lady Hatton's to-night?" inquired Priddie; "but I forgot, you are not a ball man."

There was a temporary pause, which was broken by Priddie exclaiming, "'Pon honour—Lady Atherley has changed her seat; ah! the coquette!" Ravensworth, nettled and irritated by the flippancy of his companion, could no longer support his society; he rose and abruptly quitted the box.

"Jealous of Darval, 'pon my sewl!" said Priddie, quietly seating himself in Ravensworth's place. Dudley took his station in the pit. Lady Atherley had now resumed her seat in the front, and appeared all animation! all glasses were directed towards her presence; a crowd of silly idlers stared at her; three or four loungers entered the box, to all Lady Atherley dispensed smiles. Little did Dudley know her feelings: she had retired when she found herself immediately opposite to him; she felt it necessary to conceal her tears, to appear with a smiling countenance, to feign

a cheerfulness and placidity when her heart was distracted; to rush into society when solitude would have been her solace! The group of *roués* around Ravensworth now proceeded to canvass the gay assemblage with a freedom revolting to his ears. The opera was at length over; then came the delights of the crush-room, where a mob of fashionable company assemble twice a week to enjoy the pleasure of being nearly squeezed to death,—of inhaling the odours of expiring lamps and Macassar oil.

Anid the endless din of “Lady Throgmorton’s carriage stops the way!” “Lady Kinra-ra’s servant gone for the carriage!” “Duke of Stavordale’s carriage,” “Lord Finsbury coming down”—“Prince Brugnioli’s must drive off!”—*there* may be seen old and young ladies, trying to inveigle some man to take them to their carriages; while a few flirtations are going on under the very nose of the unfortunate chaperon, who, nearly worn out in the service, sinks into a sofa, ready to expire with the

heat and bustle. A few fashionables are lipping "How hot it is! what a bear-garden! was not the singing divine? where have you buried yourself? what a perfect opera!" and similar profound and interesting remarks and queries form the usual *macedoine* of London small-talk.

From the delights of the interior let us proceed to the *agrémens* of the exterior. It was a wet night — a London coachmaker's delight; the violence of the coachmen, the whipping of the oil-skin hooded horses, the oath of the footmen, the hallooing of the link-boys, the shouts of the police, or, as the brilliant Luttrell describes it,

" Amidst the din
Of drunken coachmen *cutting* in,
Loud are the sounds of swearing, lashing,
Of tangled wheels together clashing,
Of glasses shivering, panels crashing,
As thus they try their civil forces
In whips and carriages and horses."

Dudley entered the crush-room; in a re-

mote corner sat Lady Atherley in discourse with Darval, whose eyes were fixed most admiringly upon her; and though Dudley saw enough to leave no doubt upon his mind that Darval was an infatuated admirer, he could not charge her with bestowing the slightest encouragement on him.

As Ravensworth was proceeding towards the spot where the Atherley party were seated, determined within himself, if possible, to seek some explanation, he found himself suddenly plucked by the sleeve by Mrs. Sullivan.

"My dear Mr. Ravensworth, I am delighted to see you, do pray come to my assistance; Sullivan has just gone for the carriage, and we shall be crushed to death. Allow me to introduce my niece, Miss Dunderly." During these remarks Mrs. Sullivan took Ravensworth's arm, and requested her *protégée* to do the same. Anxious as he was to get away, he found it quite impossible, and he was therefore doomed to listen, for

the hundredth time, to Mrs. Sullivan's description of her villa in the Vale of Ovoca, the beauty of the meeting of the waters, and the legend of St. Kevin.

Ravensworth bowed and smiled most complacently, occasionally giving an affirmative movement of the head; and, ascertaining that his position commanded a view of the Athereleys, he was content to listen to, at least to seem to listen to, and admire the account of the beauties of the "County Wicklow."

From his fit of abstraction he was recalled by Mrs. Sullivan's vehement address, "If ever Mr. Ravensworth you visit the Emerald Isle, it will give Sullivan and myself the greatest pleasure to see you at Ovoca Villa:—in the summer, pic-nics and boating-parties to the lakes,—and the seven churches; and in the winter there is splendid shooting."

"I shall be very happy;" replied Dudley, his thoughts still wandering.

"Then I shall look upon it as a promise:

and really the vale and the meeting of the——”
At the moment a stentorian voice announced,
“Lady Atherley’s carriage stops the way !”
Dudley rose in the middle of Mrs. Sullivan’s
harangue,—the Atherleys were moving; apolog-
gising to the astonished lady at leaving her
so abruptly, and promising to return, he pro-
ceeded towards Lady Atherley. He was about
to approach her,—at least to inquire after her
health, but though clear of Scylla he did not
escape Charybdis.

“ Dudley, my dear fellow,” exclaimed Sul-
livan, “what have you done with my ladies?”

Ravensworth cast a hurried glance towards
the spot where he had left them, and muttered
out an explanatory apology. “Lady Atherley’s
carriage must drive on !” was shouted.

“Come, Constance!” panted Lord Atherley,
“we must not keep the horses, *dear*; and
Count Sternhauld has asked me to supper,—
take my arm.” Before Ravensworth could
approach her, Lord Atherley had hurried her

into the carriage,—“Home!” cried the footman; and, meteor like, away flashed the chariot and was soon out of sight.

Baffled and dispirited, Ravensworth left the Opera-house; he reflected on the events of the evening, all was “as a phantasma and a hideous dream;” her name had been coupled with Darval’s! Every tongue was busy in its condemnation; she was looked upon as an easy prey of every coxcomb—as a coquette; she appeared to merit the censure; but all this rested on the testimony of the *babillard* Priddie, and the empty accusations of the boasting creatures to whom he had been listening. Dudley was determined to satisfy his misgivings: he would write to Constance, he would leave no means untried to arrive at the truth. Constance must not be sacrificed to the heartlessness of an accomplished *roué*; at all risks, at all desperate hazards, he would generously warn if he could not happily save her.

Day after day, Constance solaced herself by

feeling that she was acting honourably towards Ravensworth, and uprightly towards her husband; nevertheless, her affection sank deep in her heart, and her care-worn countenance betrayed the conflict within her. Had Lord Atherley treated her with gentleness and confidence, he might have regained his influence over her, for Constance's disposition was peculiarly alive to kindness; but, unfortunately, he adopted a harsh and morose line of conduct towards her, and she became daily more averse to his control and the encumbrance of his attentions.

Ravensworth determined to leave London, the scene of ruinous enchantment; to tear himself away, and try whether absence would not allay the passion which, during the last few months, had been so rapidly increasing. Painful as such a course would be, he felt it would be the wisest course to leave England; conscience, too, whispered to him that it would be right to others. There was a struggle—a deep and severe one;—but

to fly from her presence: His state of existence. He had endeavoured to hear "the still small voice," which then would struggle to be heard. His heart was so completely wounded that he felt he had no longer the power to resist the spell which charmed him. He had found the execution of his resolutions far more difficult than he had anticipated. He discovered that he could not find it in his power to love her more than he did to himself; that his love was inseparably in his bosom, a part of his being, which could end only with his life. All good resolutions failed, and he was daily employed in adding to the pavement which is said

resolved to make a vigorous effort to break the chain that bound her; she felt that an unhallowed passion had been suffered to gain strength in her breast, and that she had placed herself on a precipice no virtuous woman should hazard approaching. She determined not to permit herself to remain where she was daily encouraging, though tacitly, a passion that would sully the purity of her mind for ever; and with an ardent desire to atone for her past transgression, she decided on leaving the dangerous presence of Ravensworth, and quitting a scene where Passion was at perpetual war with principle.

Late as it was, she sought Lord Atherley, who, having a variety of dinner engagements, was delighted at the contemplated absence of his lady, especially as he felt assured the House would detain Dudley in town. His consent obtained, before nine o'clock on the following Thursday Lady Atherley was on her road to Leamington! — one motive had induced Lady Atherley to select Leamington;

her early friend and cousin, Mary Cressing~~ing~~ham, resided there, and in her society sh~~e~~ hoped to find a balm for her troubled spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

JOURNEY TO BRICKHILL.

—“ Love should be pure,
 Harmless as pilgrims’ kisses on the shrines
 Of virgin martyrs ; holy as the thoughts
 Of dying saints, when angels hover o’er them ;
 Harmonious, gentle, soft : such love should be,
 The zephyr — not the whirlwind of the soul.”

CUMBERLAND.

A FEW mornings after the event which we have recorded in the last chapter the following conversation took place between Dudley and his faithful valet, Monsieur Jean Jacques Hippolyte Dubrè.

“ Avez-vous laissé les livres chez Lady Atherley ? ”

“ Oui, Monsieur, je les ai remis moi-même.

Madame allait partir pour Warwickshire tandis que j'étais là on préparait la voie pour le voyage."

" Impossible !" said Dudley.

The intelligent Jean Jacques continua : " Madame Viney m'a dit que mi lady portait pas très-bien ; qu'elle passerait la nuit à Daventry, et qu'elle arriverait le lendemain à Leamington."

Dudley turned this information over in his mind : he had heard rumours of a separation between Lord and Lady Atherley ; he felt that he was the innocent cause of it.

" And can I desert her in the hour of trial ? " He rang his bell impatiently, " John White here." He paced the room for some minutes, when he was disturbed by a knock at the door.

" Come in. Oh, White ! I shall want you to bring the britchka as soon as it can be brought round."

Monsieur Dubré again appeared. " Cela va sans dire, mais il faut que j'aille à Northampton, d'où je reviendrai dans l'heure."

viendrai demain, emballez mes effets, et n'y mettez que le strict nécessaire ; ” said Ravensworth.

“ Oui, Monsieur.”

“ Vous ne m'y accompagnerez pas.”

In less than half an hour Ravensworth was being whirled along as fast as four post-horses could take him towards Barnet. Reaching the inn, where

“ High in the street, o'erlooking all the place,
The rampant Lion shows his kingly face,—”

the obliging landlord was at the door; half a dozen waiters rushed from the house, the ostler's bell rang; “ first and second turn-out; ” in a minute the horses were put to.

“ All right ! pay back,” said the ostler, doffing his fur cap; “ make the best of your way.”

Nothing occurred worthy of mention until Ravensworth stopped at Dunstable, famous for straw bonnets and lasses, larks (we mean birds), and immortalised in theatrical history as the spot

where “Cæsar Sylvester Dionysius Daggwood first acted to a brilliant and overflowing ~~barn~~—house I mean.” He determined to leave his carriage there, to prevent the possibility of its being discovered by Lady Atherley’s servants. Whilst framing an excuse, he entered the town; it was market-day, a crowd had assembled round the principal inn.

Dudley began to experience that pang of “conscience which makes cowards of us all;” his carriage stopped.

“Please to alight, sir?”

“Yes, show me to a private room.” He alighted, and as he entered he fancied he was recognised; he had an indistinct impression that he heard his own name mentioned, coupled with that of Ratborough. His doubts were soon proved not to be groundless, by the entrance of the waiter with two undirected covers in his hand.

“Please, sir, master would feel greatly

by your franking these letters." Dulk up a pen.

"My my, I wish to speak one word with master."

Master retimed, and "mine host" ap-

peared, six, big gaudy, but in no
wise ~~handsome~~?"

"Yes," replied Bradley; "but who are
you?"

"I am your master, Mr. Billingsley, and I
have no master, but he is as wise
as the Royal Horse Guards. He comes to you
to take money, or, some time, to set you
up."

"I will tell you master, William...
~~that you are a scoundrel, but an excellent
scoundrel, and though you have been
a scoundrel, he is a scoundrel from his
mother,~~ when the scoundrel of your mother

[REDACTED]

The landlady did understand that he left Ravensworth's just a few particular friends understanding that he was quite satisfied something more than met the eye.

The usher was now summoned; he returned a chaise and giving just some excuse about the carriage being shaken, and requested to be sent to the coach-maker at noon in the morning.

"A chaise and pair. I believe applied the man of oats, laying a pair."

"I did," said Dudley. "Offering a half-crown into his hand a minute, the obsequious wait-

"That's at the door, sir."

Dudley entered the crazy y different coloured wheels, while number of the journey he enjoyed - wagging windows broken

ning, moth-eaten cushions, rattling steps, and tumbling wheels; there was stubble too at his feet enough to hold a covey of partridges. Tucking himself up in his cloak, and wrapping a huge hunting shawl round his neck, he eventually reached the Saracen's Head, Daventry, the most pleasant of all country inns, and the landlady appeared. He now felt that he must descend to deception.

"Is there a surgeon in the town?" asked Audley.

"A most clever young man!" responded the hostess, with an air of conscious pride; "my nephew, sir."

"Pray send and desire him to let me have some tincture or lotion; I have a most excruciating toothache."

"Poor gentleman!" replied the landlady, "my dear departed husband was a victim to it; he always applied a poultice of laudanum and camomile flowers: let me make you one, will you?"

Dudley assented, ordering a light dinner seven o'clock ; and requesting the loan of ~~a~~ books his kind-hearted hostess could spare, ~~he~~ begged he might not be disturbed. The hours passed tediously on ; the noise of every carriage or coach that stopped startled him. A gentle knock at the door announced the arrival of the books—the Ladies' Magazine for 1778, the Farmer's Calendar, an odd volume of Taplin's Farriery, and a liberal moiety of the fourth volume of Pamela.

Seven o'clock arrived—Dudley's anxiety increased : could Lady Atherley's plans have been changed? Another hour passed—he heard the noise of wheels. He looked through the Venetian blinds ; a green chariot stopped, the bells rang, the servants descended from the rumble, the door of the carriage was opened, and Lady Atherley alighted.

" This way, my Lady. There's a step, my Lady."

Dudley turned from the window ; he heard

Mrs. Viney enquire for *the parlour*. The door of his room was opened and as immediately closed, as the landlady said—

“That apartment is occupied. A poor gentleman with a most dreadful toothache—he could not touch a morsel of dinner.”

We will not attempt to describe the state of nervous anxiety Dudley remained in as he paced his apartment. Every step upon the stairs caught his ear; every voice in the passage made him pause and listen. Occasionally he experienced a keen sense of remorse, as he thought of the danger to which he was exposing his beloved Constance. With admirable sophistry he, however, “laid the flattering motion to his soul,” that he was acting a brother’s part in giving her this negative protection and warning her against Darval!

The landlady now entered the room, laden with tinctures and lotions and potent drugs and draughts, enough to have kept a regiment, if four hundred strong, in health for half

Dudley ass
seven o'clock ;
books his kind
begged he might
passed tediously
or coach that s
knock at the doc
books—the Lad
Farmer's Calend.
Farrery, and a
volume of Pamela

Seven o'clock a
creased : could I
been changed ? And
the noise of wheels.
Venetian blinds ; a g
bells rang, the serva
rumble, the door of th
and Lady Atherley aligh

“ This way, my Lady.
Lady.”

Dudley turned from the

“ If you see the Rev
mrs.—gs. Dudley.”
“ Sir, Constance, do
is right hold of her m
“ we will more, and I
in you—that you have
“ Be certain,” said he
would the deepest execu
seen fully, or regard him
This conversation w
“ son of a wife,
joined the glasses, clat
a mile with his eye
full relieved servante
“ Dudley, Edmund,

“ we may never
“ in the past, w/ h
“ the rain; the
“ Dudley, Edmund,

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"If you are the Ravensworth me! — go, Dudley."

"Stay, Constance, stay!" cried he caught hold of her nervously said "one word more, and I will leave that you—that you love me."

"Be certain," said she, in a voice betrayed the deepest emotion, "it is seem fully, or regard kindly, than

This conversation was interrupted by entrance of a waiter, who busily jingled the glasses, clattered the bell on the table with his napkin, and a half relieved surveyor.

"Dudley Ravensworth," said Constance, "we may never meet again after you—" she paused, "felt a friend save me from ruin; clear my character, bless you! be still my friend!"

Constance, forcing a faint smile upon her hand. Dudley seized it with

pressed it to his throbbing heart. His whole frame shook with the violence of his contending feelings. It was a moment of agitated happiness to one; of misery and reproach to the other. A train of recollections rushed through his mind, and checked the rising of those unholy feelings to which his soul was nearly yielding. He gazed upon her with the ingenuous ardour of early affection. The temptation conquered — trial past, he endeavoured to soothe the troubled spirit of Constance, who, exhausted in mind and frame, sank senseless on the floor.

Ravensworth, horror-struck, was suddenly restored to calmness; he felt the force of his own misconduct in having given unbridled licence to his feelings, and at this moment felt that his very love upbraided him for his selfishness.

Dudley employed himself in restoring Constance to consciousness. He threw open the

window — bathed her temples with eau Cologne. She recovered slowly.

"May Heaven bless and support you!" said he with earnestness; then kissing her hand fervently, before she was aware of his intentio, he hastily quitted the room.

Constance, upon retiring to her apartment, gave herself up to the tumult of her emotions. Her thoughts turned, "in forward and reverted view," to future prospects and past events; and the crowd of recollections and anticipations, conjured up by memory, rendered her mind a perfect chaos, in which all was undefined except appalling gloom!

Constance, worn out with a harassed mind, and fatigued with her recent conflict, slept to wake unrefreshed; to endure more keenly than ever the grief that had oppressed her. Dudley, lost in his own thoughts, allowed some hours to pass away, unconscious that the morning light would soon dawn. All save himself had long been lost in death's counterfeit. At length

A deep sense of bodily fatigue aroused him. He threw himself on his bed : the fever and anxiety of his mind denied him the luxury of rest ; he fell into that drowsy state between sleeping and waking, which presents all the fanciful dreams of slumber with an indistinct consciousness of surrounding localities. The clock struck six ; the grey light of the morning was coming in at the windows. Dudley heard the rattling sound of wheels, and rushing to the near window watched with eager eyes the only pot which afforded a view of the road ; throwing it open, he leaned forward only to see the carriage which contained Lady Atherley rolling rapidly away. The keen morning air was in chilling unison with the cold misery of his heart. With the bewildered feeling of one in a feverish dream, he stood listening to the dying sounds of the carriage wheels till they were no longer audible.

We must now return to Lord Atherley, who the moment Lady Atherley left Grosvenor

Square, ordered his horses, to ride to Greenwich, to get an appetite for a white-bait dinner, to which he had been long engaged. To him it was a day of great liberty and relief; no one is more alive to enjoyment than an emancipated husband. It was nearly eight o'clock before the epicures assembled at the "Ship," to enjoy the Apician luxury of eating a fish dinner. Lord Atherley, who was in high humour, was a perfect otter on two legs, and had a twelve-horse eating power,—he was beguiling his time in the aristocratic amusement of throwing halfpence to some ragged, dirty, bare-legged urchins for a scramble in the mud.

"Shall we wait for Lumley?"

"I vote for dinner," replied Lord Atherley, "*envertu de cette axiome gastronomique, qu'attendre empêche de manger, et que manger n'empêche pas de venir.*" This saying had its due weight, and in a few moments the door was thrown open, and the landlord, followed by a host of waiters, proceeded to disencumber them-

selves of certain large dishes of piscatorial dainties.

Lord Atherley was voted unanimously to the chair; the covers were removed, and a dinner worthy the Pope on a *jour maigre*, or which Cardinals during lent might covet, appeared before them. The whole force of culinary science had been developed by the prince of artists, as far as white-bait arrangements are concerned. The president was gloating his eyes on the steaming platters, undecided between the water zuchée of perch, tench, and flounder,—eels, plain, stewed, and spitchcocked,—fried flounders,—salmon, boiled and broiled,—soles,—white-bait, (which some one likens to silkworms in batter,) when an arrival attracted his attention.

"Ah, Lumley!" exclaimed a dozen voices, "better late than never; but how have you escaped the house? has Johnstone postponed his motion? sit next to Atherley,—he will make room."

"Oh no, Johnstone was on his leg Lumley, I left him advocating 'the the importation of best Dantzic; free peal of the corn laws,'— but I was enough to get a pair. Dudley Ra was called unexpectedly from town."

"Ravensworth!" said Lord Ath at that moment was helping himself bait, and calling for the brown bread, the cayenne, and all the accompani give zest to the Lilliputian fry.

"Yes, Ravensworth; he must be i the tenth time we have paired this Sure such a pair was never seen."

It would be impossible to des Atherley's feelings during the remain dinner; he looked, as Mrs. Malaprop like "one of the Derbyshire putrefa

"Why, Atherley, you don't eat? glass of wine, then." "Give 'the Atherley." "Why, old fellow, your appetite; he 's a lucky dog th

“ Why, Atherley, you ‘ve forgotten your own
to, ‘lentement et copieusement ;’ you ‘re
ting your dinner like a stage-coach passen-
eating against time ; take a glass of cup
h me.” And Lord Atherley did drink, and
ply too.

At an early hour he pleaded indisposition
retired. In a sullen humour he reached
house and entered his room ; his servant
ught in lights ; for some time Lord Ather-
paced it in moody silence, then turning
and asked sharply whether Mr. Ravensworth
called or sent that day ?”

“ I ‘ll enquire, my Lord.”

Left to himself, Lord Atherley began to soli-
quise, “ It can’t be ;” he was interrupted by
e return of his trusty valet.

“ Mr. Ravensworth has not called, my Lord ;
it he sent a packet of books this morning to
y Lady ; John was out of the way, and Mr.
ubré gave them to Mrs. Viney.”

A groan escaped the nobleman. “ Call me

at eight o'clock ; have the carriage ready at half-past nine."

Before ten o'clock on the following morning Lord Atherley's chariot, with four good horses and two smart postboys, was at the door, and within ten minutes the agitated peer was within it, and proceeding full gallop towards Barnet. We will pass over his journey, which, like all summer journeys, was hot, dusty, and disagreeable, until we bring him to the open door of the far-famed Saracen's Head, Daventry. The carriage stopped, then came *such* a peal at the ostler's bell, and out ran half-a-dozen stable-keepers. The hostess, with her matrons, appeared at the door. If anything could have soothed Lord Atherley's mind it would have been the profound respect paid him by the landlady and her well-organised establishment, as he was ushered into a very comfortable room. "Please to order dinner, my Lord ; here 's the bill of fare ;" which, of course, consisted of the eternal indigenous dishes, "tender mutton chop,

beautiful veal cutlet, and nice rump steak." Lord Atherley was about to inquire after some fish, when the landlady continued,—" My Lady left at eight this morning, my Lord." A suppressed sigh, or rather, a prose groan, escaped him.

" Was your house full last night?" inquired the Peer suspiciously.

" We had a wedding-party from Bourton, my Lord, and one gentleman from London ;—" Lord Atherley bit his lips ;—" A gentleman from London ——"

This colloquy was put an end to by the entrance of the head chambermaid, Mary Maggs. " Did you ring, ma'am ?" demanded the obsequious intruder.

" No, Maggs; but stay, do you happen to know the gentleman's name last night in the blue parlour ?"

" Really, ma'am, I did hear ; bless me ! Ra, Ra—, lor', I shall forget my own name next !"

" Never mind, Mrs. Maggs," said Lord

Atherley, who had listened in breathless horror and astonishment.

"John Ostler knows ; I think he heerd it from the postboy. Mr.—, Mr.—, he's a M.P. I declare how strange," muttered the loquacious bed-maker as she left the room, "I never was took so forgetsome since my name was Maggs."

Now Mrs. Maggs knew perfectly well the name of the gentleman in the blue parlour, but not wishing to be detected in her prying propensities, thought, by first mentioning the circumstance to her second in office, who would naturally mention it through the house,—the "drawer of the bill" might go undiscovered; on the same principle that stolen notes from this country, once placed in the hands of a Rotterdam or Amsterdam *fence*, id est, receiver-general of stolen goods, are so speedily passed on Change, from hand to hand, as to defy detection. Now we are not at all prepared to state that the curiosity of the fair sex is in-

atiable ; but as there are exceptions to all general rules, we must be charitable enough to suppose that Mary Maggs was the exception. Undoubtedly she was one of the descendants of Eve who had profited little by her example. No sooner did a mysterious stranger arrive at the Saracen's Head, than Mrs. Maggs commenced her inquisition. Portmanteaus, valises, carpet-bags, dressing-cases, cloaks, umbrellas, and hats, were all inspected in the hopes of finding the owner's name..

In the case we have just alluded to, Ravensworth's *incog.* had speedily been discovered, and, strange to say, by the very means he had adopted to make it more secure ; the cloak and shawl in which he had counterfeited the suffering patient, had marks of his identity. In the former, his name appeared in full length : in the latter, his initials. The arrival of Lady Atherley had driven every thought, save of her, out of his mind ; and in his temporary absence Mrs. Maggs had just dropped in, and

satisfied her (at least her first parent's) *predispositions.*

Lord Atherley, meanwhile, felt all "the agony, the doubts, the fears," of a jealous, tortured mind. Ringing the bell, the barmaid appeared. "Be kind enough to order the carriage, make out my bill, and send the waiter and chambermaid."

"Yes, my Lord. Horses to Southam?"

"No, no," stammered his Lordship: "to Towcester. I had forgotten some business in London." The discreet Hebe curtsied, and left the room,—then followed a trifling peal of bells.

"Lord Atherley's carriage round,—ticket Towcester. Waiter and chambermaid." — A knock at the door. "Come in."

Mrs. Maggs appeared. "Please to want the chambermaid?"

"Here's half-a-crown for you," said Lord Atherley, in as indifferent a manner as he could command.

"Thank you, my Lord. I find, from John Ostler, the gentleman as slept in No. 7 last night, and who occupied the blue parlour,—was Mr. Ravensworth, M.P. The gentleman, in his hurry, left his shawl behind him;" producing at the same time "the handkerchief."—Like Othello's there seemed magic in it, for Lord Atherley muttered, bit his lips, and rushed out of the room. Seizing the bill from the landlady as he passed the bar, he entered his carriage.

"I'll send the amount by the postboy."

"Thank you, my Lord," said the hostess, curtseying.

"Make the best of your way, boys!" cried John Ostler.—The carriage was soon out of sight.

We pass over the journey. Before night Lord Atherley had reached London. Perplexed in the extreme by his now confirmed suspicions, he became wild and ungovernable; his exasperation against his unhappy wife;

and, with a demoniac exultation, caused by rage, disappointment, and jealousy,—jealousy, the most bitter poisonous herb that roots itself in the garden of the mind. He sent for his lawyer, and dictated as much indignation, in the shape of a letter, as he possibly could. He haughtily reminded Lady Atherley, that she had forfeited every virtue of her sex; he forbade her to return to her home, and desired her to remain at Leamington until he had made arrangements for a separation.

“Her thoughtlessness may have led her into a thousand follies, but nothing worse, I hope,” said Mr. Cresswell, the kind-hearted man of business.

“She shall never enter under my roof again!” cried Lord Atherley, frantic with rage. “She has wronged me!—made me contemptible in my own eyes!—in the eyes of the world! Stung me!—wounded me to the core by her treachery!”

To keep calm the mind of a man under

the influence of jealousy, is no easy task—even for a lawyer ; and the professional man, feeling the impossibility of pacifying his client, respectfully took his leave, but not before he had expressed a hope “ that affairs might take a more favourable turn.”

When Lord Atherley had committed this over-hasty act, he began to find himself—in very truth and spirit—forlorn, desolate ! He was now left to himself in the world. To describe his feelings were impossible : his home had been embittered, first by suspicions, then by dissensions, and now was ruined by guilt ! yet, notwithstanding all the harshness and coarse severity of his character, he was now suffering all that sad weakness of mind which arises from a lingering affection for the object of our former love, mingled with a sense of injury received from that very object : he had banished Constance from his house ; he had lost her for ever ; all was like a dream. A woman keenly alive to every delicacy and refine-

ment could not surely be the worthless being he had lately pictured to himself. To believe her false—to believe she had deceived him,—was agony intense. He paced the room in a state of stupor, broken in upon by fits of delirious excitement: at one moment all was hatred and excitement, the next was all regret; now fury and indignation raged, and then despondency ensued, which was succeeded by the gnawing torture, the bitter agonising consciousness of self-reproach. The remainder of the day he passed in a state bordering on insanity.

CHAPTER VII.

LEAMINGTON.

" In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motives, looks, and sighs;
At every word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply the place of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that."

POPE.

WHILE Lord Atherley was occupied as we have related in the last chapter, a scene was passing elsewhere in which he was involved, and, for the development of which, we must take our readers to Leamington, where Lady Atherley had arrived after a tedious journey,

rendered as uncomfortable as an unheavy roads, and a mizzling rain at it. Every thing accorded with the her sick and desponding soul, and in her carriage in a sort of melancholy abandoning herself only to the contemplation of the darkest prospects. Leamington of which we write was in its infancy confined only to the pastoral denomination of some wandering mineralogists had hit and tasted the waters, pronounced to be eminently medicinal—a great against every disorder under the short time this scarcely peopled hamlet by degrees, to the proud distantly populous town. Hotels, pumps, sedan chairs, and apothecaries, in the usual proportion.

Reading-rooms, circulating-librarians' rooms, theatres, baths, boats followed in their train; and it was established, that no person of bis-

could get it riveted without a visit to
pa. World-wide noblemen, seated and
tied with artificial luxuries; right here
de hysterical drowsers, suffering from
excessive consumption as a long course of
a visit with their gadding, sickly all
, tainted with insidious dissipation,
seated with the most and most
idle dreams from the West; last dinner
in some of the parades, from the East;
men with their exotic, whose manners,
were "more out of the same place of
gentry" according to custom in the
one time pastime & the, with
the more and again a goodly
= Indian names and people from
~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~
? the most important function
was ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~
most ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~
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enough to cure; in short, the maimed, the halt, the blind, the consumptive, the dyspeptic, the hypochondriac,—all votaries to the shrine of Hygeia,—driven by bile or *bon ton*, swarmed to this popular spot,—this modern Montpellier, to seek heaven's greatest boon, health. All were industriously engaged in making wry faces, and swallowing “potations pottle-deep” of this physical and filthy stream.

It has, however, been left to One to complete this work. By the wand of this medical enchanter, a populous and flourishing town of crescents, paragons, parades, and villas has risen up; this once quiet village is now alive with the wanderers of every nation. Jostling crowds, angry politics, warring newspapers,—all the vices, jealousies, dissipations, and vexations of a large community, have displaced its former monotony. To Jephson, then, must the prosperity be attributed; his talents need no feeble praise, nor is this the place to speak of him; his memory will be

imbalmed in the hearts of all who have profited by his skill; and Leamington will remain a lasting monument to him who has conferred such benefits upon mankind.

Enough, however, of Leamington, as a Spa. Constance meditated on the effect Dudley Ravensworth's rash proceeding would produce upon her husband, should he ever become acquainted with it. She reflected with the greatest anxiety upon the interpretation to which such an incident would in his mind be liable, and, guiltless as she was of giving her sanction to it, she was haunted with the dread of the evil consequences that might result from it. It is true her husband had been too severe with her, and had remonstrated but too coarsely, for his whole nature was rugged and irascible; and though disgusted by such rugged and ungracious conduct, she was scarcely less angry with herself, for having tacitly admitted Ravensworth's renewed and but too marked attention.

Wearied and dispirited Constance herself on her bed, hoping to lose the remembrance of the various events of the last two days. But sleep, as the poet

" Still last to come where 'tis desired," shunned her aching eyes. A week and the agitation she had experienced had so much, though the health of Constance has known the torment of suspense, lengthening torture. That day and night one passed in fruitless expectation of a letter from Lord Atherley, although he promised to communicate his wishes in her plans; the night in unceas- fulness; fearful dreams, the com- feverish sleep, deprived her of rest. On the third morning a letter was put into Lord Atherley's hand; it was from Lord For some minutes she durst not open it; strange foreboding filled her mind; she

se of his silence, and now more dread-
sation of that silence. At length she
he seal, but she was not prepared for
tents: as she read them the life-blood
around her heart. It would be im-
possible to describe the sensation produced
onstance.

than an hour's free indulgence in profound
silence he was startled by a light knock at the
door. Her whole nerves had been so much
excited that she had hardly energy enough to
rouse herself to heed it. At length she roused
herself, and the smiling face of Mary Cressing-
ton appeared behind the opening door—all
as kind, affectionate, and attentive was
she in her part. But all was needed.

She was not an uninterested observer
of the various expressions that passed over
John's countenance; but her love for
him was so coupled with respect, that for
a time she forbore to ask what so evidently
and strangely disturbed, nay distracted

her. Mary now leaned an anxious ear to *the* recital of her distresses.

Constance, speaking through her gathering tears, said, "How shall I tell you,—oh! how shall I tell you all that has passed?"

"Speak, dearest Constance," replied Mary; "my friendship has always been yours; it is all I can offer you; confide in me; let me share your troubles."

"Bless you, my more than sister!" exclaimed Constance; "but the blow has been so sudden—so unexpected."

A new idea now darted into Mary's mind, and turning as pale as her friend, she exclaimed,—

"No bad news of Mr. Ravensworth?" for with that penetration which women possess regarding one another, she had long discovered, that, under a veil of gaiety, Lady Atherley had concealed a secret grief; one that, notwithstanding her confidence in her, she had never ventured to reveal.

"No! read *this!*" cried Constance, throwing down the letter before her.

Mary read, and too clearly perceived the magnitude of the evils which encompassed her friend: the blight which had come over her worldly hopes, was apparent; she saw how vain were all words of consolation; she looked upon her in speechless sorrow, on one so young, yet so unfortunate! she strove to lead her thoughts into some more quiet channel, to inspire her with hope. Constance's swelling heart needed all relief: in Mary's presence she had restrained her tears, but no sooner had her friend left her, than they burst forth in torrents! She wept long and bitterly; and though this effort so far relieved her as to abate the first shock with which she had received the intelligence the letter contained, it left, however, a more settled melancholy upon her: she felt intensely her solitary and sad condition; she was now spurned by her husband; Dudley was at a distance; her

thoughts, in self-condemnation to her heart, and all the damnation flashed across her mind, pified in her every sense; she held the letter in inarticulate despair, the present, the future; terrible. Forsaken, unprotected, object of contempt—could fate mask? Heavily passed the disastrous review of her past career, neglected, friends estranged, hostile to her; of health impaired by affection: nor did any favourable prospect enliven her dreary condition.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCANDAL.

■ La langue du détracteur est un feu dévorant qui
■ rit tout ce qu'il touche ; qui ne laisse partout où il a
■ é que ruine et désolation ; qui pénètre jusque dans
■ entrailles de la terre, et va s'attacher aux choses les
■ cachées ; qui change en de viles cendres ce qui nous
■ t paru, il n'y a qu'un moment, si brillant et "si
■ eieux ; qui, dans le temps même qu'il paraît éteint, agit
■ plus de violence et de danger que jamais, et qui
■ cit enfin ce qu'il ne peut consumer."

MASSILLON.

THE world, more especially the Leamington
world, was ringing with the " delicate af-
fair," as it was called ; the tongue of every
newspaper was in full activity ; and the minds
the inquisitive and scandal-hunters, were

now convinced of the truth of report. The affair had been one or two mutual friends,* went from house to house in friends with the *virus* of report, pledge of secrecy ;—thereby producing marvellously rapid diffusion. So great a phenomenon as a secret does not be expected in Leamington in any other place. Curiosity is ably an overpowering passion, like that of Adam and Eve ; for it is a passion ! Despite of the *onu* of mother's first fault, women, we are not more under the influence than men ; but while we admit it too, and, moreover, most readily, the fair sex the limited power of keeping a secret inviolable, we are rather inclined to believe that the communicating-

ords of the creation. What can exceed the eagerness, the bursting impatience of the true endulum-tongued babbler of the tabby coteries,—swelling with a sense of importance at the chance of affecting all the minds of her scandal-loving neighbours with tales of surmisings and back-biting.

It was at the tea-table of a little serious coterie, of which Mrs. Skardon, a sour and sanctimonious gossip, was the head, that the following charitable reflections were made upon Lady Atherley, whose society, or patronage rather, till that day, they had courted with the greatest avidity. There are few things more surprising than the meanness exhibited, even in the *beau monde*, to procure acquaintance with those who are looked upon as the leaders of *ton*; the falsehoods that are told, the degradations that are submitted to, are incalculable. Mrs. Skardon had failed in an introduction to Lady Atherley, though she had put every paltry engine in motion to accomplish her wishes. “ Hinc

illæ lacrymæ!" that is, in Leamington language, "hence this bile!" It was envy that actuated and *embittered* Mrs. Skardon, and many of her friends, to censure one they had previously courted; — envy, that despicable and grovelling feeling which springs out of paltry natures, the mushrooms of little minds; which resorts to every evil artifice to serve its purposes,— to falsehood, to detraction, to calumny, and to slander! Mrs. Skardon was one of those ladies who inflict more mischief by their insinuations, than the most venomous propagators of downright palpable falsehoods: inasmuch as filmy inuendos gain an easier credence, and are less easily refuted, than positive accusations.

This Leamington amalgamation of Mrs. Candour and Sneerwell wished to gain the reputation of being a kindly, true, and liberal person; and, to avoid the imputation of being a scoundrel, had recourse to disingenuous *finesse*, pretending that the stories

hich had originated with herself had been communicated by others, whom she sharply rebuked for their censorious tongues.

"I beg your pardon for being so late," cried our old acquaintance Miss St. Leger, as she hastened into the room, "but really I was detained so long at the Adult Orphans' School, that I could not be here sooner." Here Miss St. Leger assumed the form of a religious, charitable, zealous *attachée* to adults, and such she was; but she met no charity from adults in return.

The name of Lady Atherley was accidentally mentioned, when Mrs. Skardon gave a deep sigh of what Ophelia calls the "bulk-shattering" order, and, with a look of most admired commiseration, exclaimed,—

"Poor Lord Atherley ! that profligate abandoned wife of his, will drive him mad !" Her editors were all attention ; they had heard rumour of Lady Atherley's elopement, but were dying to hear *all* the particulars.

"Every one knows," continued the Candour-

Sneerwell, "that Mr. Ravensworth notorious gambler, that he has ruined my family; *that*, I fear, there is no denying; have been told by those who *ought* to know that he drinks, and lives with the *wives* of society; for *this*, however, I trust the foundation. I should be the last person to say anything unkind, but I have been told that he is a Radical, or an atheist—each is equally bad—I am not sure which it may be (if there is any difference)! As for Lady Atherley, there were odd stories which I trust were exaggerations, of her having an affair with a certain Marquis; but truly, if things are false, it is quite monstrous that people should invent such wicked and malignant calumnies. I myself never listened to the gossip of backbiting neighbours, but I have not quite shut one's eyes; and really, Lady Atherley's conduct last year at the Carlton ball, was, to say the least of it, impudent. But remember, none of these stories are true."

with me; for if there is one thing upon the earth that I abominate, it is tattling and detraction!" Thus talked the characters in the Leamington edition of the School for Scandal.

We have remarked upon the universal prevalence and almost irresistible career of curiosity, and on the importance which "trifles light as air" acquire, when valuable subjects of investigation are wanting. In large towns society is formed into different circles, which have their particular topics of conversation. The trifling incidents which happen, excite a temporary discussion, and perhaps furnish food for a nine days' wonder; these, however, are soon forgotten amidst the multiplicity of occurrences which are of a more important nature, and which more forcibly attract the attention of the public.

In a large and crowded metropolis a variety of interesting objects and incidents successively occur to excite and gratify curiosity, and furnish general conversation. In small communi-

ties the case is different; there society is on a more contracted scale, and the sphere of observation is confined within narrower limits; and there, too, the subjects of observation are few and trivial. A paucity of ideas must be expected in the latter, and trifles become of importance and interest. In such a state of intellectual sterility, general attention is eagerly turned to insignificant objects and events, the mind is engaged in frivolous inquiries, and the occurrences in a neighbour's family, the tiny events of the village, the *on dits* of the little day—engage attention, and excite the greatest and profoundest interest and scrutiny.

Nothing could exceed the deep humiliation Constance felt at encountering the “world's dread sneer,”—nay, worse, its compassion! —The compassion of the world is but the seal set to the confirmation of crime, in *soft wax*.—She was received with coldness and frigid civility, and mortified at seeing the half-concealed look of disapprobation from those, who,

charitably disposed, were slow to blame, and who censured with pitying mildness. The haughty repulsive glance of others, too, — who never were placed in temptation's way, and who plumed themselves upon their immaculate conduct, — was to be encountered and — endured! The sufferer must be exposed to the satisfaction of those who triumphed at the fall of one whose talents, beauty, and rank, had made her “the observed of all observers !”

It were vain to detail the petty instances of annoyances that were resorted to.

“ There can be no excuse for Lady Atherley,” said Miss St. Leger, with a toss of the head and a haughty curl of the nose.

“ I always knew it would come to this ! ” exclaimed another.

“ Her life has been a tissue of folly and absurdity,” added a third.

“ To do her justice, poor dear, though silly and vain, I never thought her criminal.”

“ She 's a kind-hearted young creature ! ”

exclaimed another friend, who knew that the secret of the most effective scandal-mongering is to praise the object of your malice, though, like Mrs. Candour's "sincerity,"—sincerity forces her to divulge a few objectionable qualities and incidents.

Then followed the "wise saws," and wholesome truisms, the bitter taunts, the insulting scorn, the dark inuendos, and ill-timed jests, of those pestilential cankerworms of society,—the whisperers of the neighbourhood.

Ravensworth did not escape from the net spread to enmesh and suffocate reputations. All persons now seemed suddenly striving to blacken the man, who, but a few months before, was looked upon as a gentleman, scholar, and man of *ton*! He was at once declared to be a gamester and a profligate, to be in debt to every tradesman, and to be so thronged with intrigues that damaged characters were laid at his door in bales. Every one declared he was the most accomplished villain

of the day ; and every one began to protest, with extempore discretion, that they had always distrusted even the appearance of his various virtues. He was by general coterie-consent *outlawed* as a man of feeling, delicacy, discretion, or honour.

Had an ordinary destiny awaited Constance,—a fall from fortune, a groundless estrangement of friends,—she would have borne her misfortune with resignation; but hers was, indeed, an appalling fate ! In vain she tried to reason herself into firmness : days passed before she came to any resolution as to how she ought to act ;—too feeble both in body and mind to take any decided step, a week had passed, and she still was wavering as to the line of conduct she ought to pursue. She was too proud to throw herself upon her husband's pity and claim forgiveness : she felt that the saddest solitude was preferable to forcing herself upon one who had rejected her, and who would meet her with contempt. A little reflection aroused

her from the lethargy into which she had been plunged, and she felt that to appeal to her father and mother for protection, was her only true resource. But she dreaded the austerity of Sir Alexander, and, still more, the cold advice of Lady Margaret; and hence she deferred, from day to day, the painful task of addressing them. At length her thoughts became sufficiently collected to enable her to form projects for the future.

On the marriage of their daughter, Sir Alexander and Lady Margaret Graham had retired from the London world. Graham Castle was shut up, the house in Grosvenor Square let, and they had devoted their summers to Spa and Baden Baden; and their winters to Bath and Cheltenham. Lady Margaret felt, with peculiar keenness, the decrease of homage in those around her; and instead of sinking calmly and gracefully into the vale of years, she "hastened towards her setting" with a chequered and stormy lustre. The result of hours of serious

meditation in Constance was a letter to her mother; and, by return of post, she received the following ostentatious homily — upon the virtue of forgiveness, &c.—written in a *singular* style, though in the plural number.

‘MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

“Your justly esteemed father, Sir Alexander, and myself, have ever congratulated ourselves on the possession of a child whose integrity and pureness of heart had gained her the respect and affection of all who knew her. It is with grief and shame we have heard of your distressing disregard of yourself. While, however, we feel the disgrace that such a step has brought upon our ancient family, our imperative sense of parental duty induces us to be indulgent and compassionate, and to temper our feelings with forbearance and pity. It is not our wish to judge of you with harshness or severity,—though a more wanton act than that you have

committed, never was paralleled (to leave your husband's home). Our object is to exhort, not to reprove;—to awaken you to a right sense of your duty, not to overwhelm you with natural but vain remonstrances. In this world of tribulation, we must all walk our ways in the same knowledge that we are compassed round with dangers and disappointments and inevitable miseries. I shall certainly make no objection to receive you as my guest until arrangements, suitable to your rank and station, are decided upon. God help me! It is a cruel fate, in my meridian of life, to have to reap troubles not of my own sowing. But I pray for patience to be granted to Sir Alexander and myself, and am,

“ Your afflicted

“ And affectionate Mother,

“ MARGARET GRAHAM.

“ P.S. Sir Alexander, in addition to all this, is labouring under a severe cold.”

“ To Lady Atherley, Leamington.”

The distressing events of the preceding week had so entirely engrossed Lady Atherley's thoughts, that it was not until she was on the first stage to London, that the consideration of her future plans forced itself upon her attention. Various (but varying only in their degrees of misery) were the thoughts that occupied her mind on this sad and solitary journey; but we will not pause to describe her depression of spirit, or how often Constance pressed her hands upon her eyes to check the tears that *would* gush forth. She at times had hardly the heart to continue her journey; deeply did she feel the mortification of returning to that home she had left under such very different circumstances! acutely alive was she to the humiliation of throwing herself upon her offended relatives, now that her altered fortunes had destroyed her position in society.

As Lady Atherley approached the metropolis, and looked back upon all which had befallen her since she had quitted it, she found it diffi-

cult to convince herself that but a few weeks had elapsed since that period!

“ Time and the hour run through the roughest day,” and Constance’s journey was at its end. The carriage drove up to the door of her parents. Sad, and dreadfully fatigued, she crossed the hall, passing through a lane of formidable-looking footmen. As she ascended the stairs she was met by the groom of the chambers, who, pompously calling to a page, desired that Lady Margaret’s message might be given to Lady Atherley! The substance of it was that neither Sir Alexander nor her Ladyship would be at home until a very late hour.

Lady Atherley was then conducted to the apartment she was to occupy. Here, in solitude, the events of the last month passed in rapid and confused review before her! her warm and ardent affection had been chilled by the rigidly phrased letter of Lady Margaret. A feeling of loneliness oppressed her: the for-

mality with which she was now treated, the affectionate parting when last she quitted her father's roof, and the cold reception she *now* met with (if reception it could be called at all), made her plunge her face in her clutched hands, and struggle with tears that would perforce "visit her sad eyes."

Wearied and dispirited, she threw herself on her sofa, hoping to lose in sleep the remembrance of the day's events. Time moved on but slowly; at length a loud knocking was heard, some one asked admittance at her door; she opened it, and Mrs. Griffiths (Lady Margaret's woman) appeared, and with a reserved air, not to be mistaken, said, "Her Ladyship wished to see Lady Atherley before she retired to rest."

Constance followed "in silence and tears." She entered Lady Margaret's room, and advanced to meet her mother with the most affectionate earnestness, but was chilled by a ceremonious and cold reception. Lady Margaret

slightly embraced her, and maintained a haughty silence: she had all the appearance of one struggling to pardon, and to pardon with dignity. The shadow of kindness came, and faded like a ghost of the once-living affection. There was no generous abandonment of heart to heart, nothing to mark the loving and grieving and generous mother, brooding over a child in the hour of overwhelming misfortune!

They parted for the night. Constance awoke the next morning, and awoke to the entire consciousness of where and with whom she was; overwhelming and tumultuous were the sensations that occupied her mind, and with her morning devotions were mixed humble entreaties to be endowed with that resignation which her acute sense of misery rendered necessary to her. She endeavoured to think she was under a parent's roof, but how came she there? and where in Sir Alexander and Lady Margaret could she find trace of a father and a

mother? Her own natural home was closed against her,—her name was on every tongue; she was an outcast! While these afflicting and appalling thoughts crowded upon her memory, it required all her strength of mind to enable her to bear up against contending, confounding, stupifying emotions. Severe was the conflict in her mind, and powerful; fatal was the effect upon her frame, and she betrayed symptoms of approaching illness. It was soon impossible to conceal that Lady Atherley was ill,—seriously ill; she had a wildness in her eye, like the glance—the glassed lustre of the eye—that seems the lurid light of fever or the misleading one of consumption.

It was not long before the medical man made his appearance, and his report was a very discouraging one: Lady Atherley was suffering under a severe attack of fever, and would be unlikely to quit her bed for some weeks. At the end of a longer period than even *that*, she

was but so far recovered as to be able to see Lord Atherley's man of business. He placed a paper in her hands, granting her an annuity for life; and adding a condition that she would take possession of Wingfield Manor House, a property belonging to Lord Atherley. Compton Audley was to be shut up, and Lord Atherley had left for Paris, the city for broken or estranged hearts, and *bon-vivants*!

CHAPTER IX.

JOURNEY TO WINGFIELD.

"Oh, could I feel as I have felt, or be what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a vanish'd
scene;
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish though
they be,
So midst the wither'd waste of life, those tears would flow
to me."

BYRON.

It was a bright clear frosty morning, with every thing sparkling in the sunshine. The last dry leaves of the preceding year still lingered on the branches of the trees, clothing the form of nature in the russet livery of decay, when Lady Atherley left London for the solitary asylum her husband had offered to her.

Wingfield Manor House, called in modern

days Atherley Manor, was formerly the splendid seat of the family of the Wingfields, and had passed, with the extensive estate attached to it, into the hands of the present Lord Atherley's great grandfather by his marriage with the heiress of that ancient house; and whose family pedigrees gave them possession of it before the Norman conquest. This noble residence was nearly destroyed by fire early in the sixteenth century, one wing being reduced to ruin; the remaining and centre one, containing chapel, hall, state, sleeping, and dining rooms, was fortunately saved, and remained in the same state as when honoured by the presence of Edward VI., in 1547.

"It was that goodly house," in which the youthful monarch stated, "he had been marvellously, yea, rather excessively banketted;" in 1591, (according to an old illuminated MS.) Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, "nature's glory," the "world's wonder," "fortune's empress," had been "most royallie feasted."

The ruins of the east wing contained the most perfect traces of the general architecture, and exhibited proofs of its amazing strength. The gateway, flanked by its ivy-grown towers, frowned against time; the fallen roof, blackened gable, and ruinous walls, showed desolation's triumph over poverty! On Lord Atherley's accession, the immense range of out-offices had been converted into cottages.

The country around was indescribably dreary; a dense wilderness immediately behind the manor-house, arose hill after hill, in weary succession, whose withered fern and shrivelled heather, afforded but a bare existence to the browsing flocks ("wilder far than they") that gleaned their pasture. The brown moors assumed a barren mossy hue, and the dusky soil in large masses, bereft of herbs and grass, and clad only with low birches and cheerless pines and firs, showed nature in all her poverty.

No human habitation met your eyes far and

wide, and when you encountered the aged shepherd idling about, your only wonder was, where he could possibly find a home. The moor, where it was met by the horizon, was bounded by a thickly wooded domain, where huge oaks, the growth of centuries, waved over long dark terraces of rank grass, which the scythe had not touched for years. Dilapidated grottoes of shell-work, now green with moss, and hermitages in ruins, were within these olden shades ; and while they impressed upon the mind that grandeur once dwelt there, at the same moment proclaimed, in ruins legible as black letter, the tale of its long desertion.

It is melancholy to view the almost general devastation of the venerable structures which were once the pride and ornament of "merrie England ;" the strongholds of illustrious and ancient families during the civil wars. The vaulted roof, the fretted window, the grassy courts, the arched passages no longer echo the voice of festivity and joy ; all is deserted, and

"The echo and the empty tread,
But sound like voices of the dead."

And yet it were impossible to look upon the dilapidated remains of this vast edifice, which had formerly been the dwelling-place of the Wingfields and Atherleys, in all their power and grandeur, without a sensation almost amounting to awe! There is no ruin without its thousand stirring associations;—and could the walls but speak, what historians would they be of those times, to which age gives so shadowy an interest! There is a melancholy pleasure in reflecting on all the eras of the house's glory, now like the brief records of its occupiers, passed away almost into oblivion. Those times arise anew, when its lofty halls, decorated with all the splendid trappings of wealth and magnificence, and peopled with the noble, the brave, and the beautiful, resound with the voices of life and revelry.

The journey was drearily performed, with-

out accident, and on the second evening Lady Atherley approached the Wingfield estate; but she noticed it not. With a heavy heart, and enfeebled by her recent illness, she sat in a corner of the carriage, her veil closely drawn over her. November had set in, that month of darkness, storms, and mists; it was a cold afternoon, and the sun was declining, leaving a gloomy twilight. The country looked sad, damp, and comfortless; the trees were all but stripped of their leaves, the hail beat against the window, and the prospect was cheerless. All was in unison with one desolate heart; in the language of Ossian "Autumn was dark on the mountains; grey mists rest on the hills, dark rolls the river through the narrow plain, the leaves whirl round with the wind, and strew the grave of the dead." Upon the carriage drawing up at the gate a loud ringing at the bell aroused Constance from her reverie, and she perceived the cold and stern manor-house, standing upon the brow of a bleak hill.

The suite of apartments which had been arranged for the occupation of Lady Atherley, were the state-rooms situated in the wing of the building we have already described ; and they still preserved their polished floors of black oak. The walls were painted “ after the manner of the ancient period with legendary stories.” The stately couch, with its dark damask curtains, its ponderous cornices, exquisitely carved in emblems of war ; the high-backed chairs, covered with old tapestry, in colours so faded that scarcely a vestige of the subject could be traced ; the fine oak carvings — all gave a solemnity to the place that toned in with Constance’s forlorn spirit, and “ suited the gloomy habit of her soul.” Fatigued with bodily exertion, from the length of the journey and badness of the roads, and not a little harassed in mind, Constance yielded herself up, distressed and worn, from overpowering and contending thoughts, early to rest. Sleep, which for some time had abandoned her

restless pillow, returned that night like a dove from the troubled waters to its nest, and brooded with all its peaceful influence over it; bringing too, on its healing wings, such a "rosy dream" of renovating happiness, as seemed to be the reflection of the bright and flitting form of *past* happiness. She dreamed of the time, when with a spirit unbroken by "aught remorse could claim or virtue scorn," and alive only to unalloyed serenity, she had centred her every hope, her affection on one who had been her all; the source of every feeling, the end of every wish! Then came gentle shadowings of love, and all that her *first* love had promised her; and then, with bitter feelings did she arrive at the infatuation that had made her (in the eyes of the world,) "fall, never to rise again," and in her affliction she wept over the complicated error that had sacrificed her.

But to return: Ravensworth was thunderstruck at hearing of the separation; the possi-

bility of so stern and strong a proceeding had never occurred to him. To condemn Lady Atherley unheard, appeared so great an act of cruelty in her husband, that it curdled his very blood to dwell upon it. His heart, sensible only of Constance's injuries, rose indignantly against him who had thus sealed her fate. The power which Constance had established in his breast, became painfully increased : he looked upon her as deeply, irreparably injured ; he had loved her (as devotedly as man seldom does love) in her prosperity, and now, at the period of suffering, with a spirit chastened and softened by affliction, his feelings were a thousand times more absorbed in her.

Callous, indeed, must have grown the heart of Dudley, if it had lost its fealty to Constance while under so severe a trial. He felt that he had wrought all her misery ; and to soothe her in adversity, to support and guide her through the dreary path of life, to mitigate her distresses, seemed to remain his dearest duty,

as it would be his only solace. But how to accomplish this generous wish,—to follow Lady Atherley to her place of seclusion would be to confirm the ruin of her character. He would seek Lord Atherley, unburthen his mind to him, exonerate Lady Atherley, and at any peril and every sacrifice do her reputation justice. He resolved to crush all feelings which could in the slightest way impede Constance's restoration to society.

Had Dudley wanted an immediate illustration of the fragile nature of man's resolutions, and of how much they are the sport of fortune, he could have found one at once in his own breast. Ravensworth ordered his horse, determined to proceed immediately to Isleworth, where Mr. Cresswell (the kind-hearted man of business to Lord Atherley, to whom we have before alluded,) dwelt. It was a clear, frosty day; Ravensworth had not proceeded further than that "public," the half-way house between Hyde Park corner and Kensington;

when his horse trod on a loose, sharp flint,—came down, and after a plunging endeavour to save himself, cut his knees so dreadfully, that to proceed was impossible.

And here we must digress. There is no better proof of the liberty of the subject, nor a finer specimen of the English saying, “that a man’s house is his castle,” than the half-way house in question. There it stands, a stubborn proof, an unsightly monument of the national regard to civil rights. Within a short distance of the palaces of Kensington, St. James, and Buckingham—near to the residences of England’s proudest nobles—this miserable looking hostelry “rears its humble head,” and asserts its title to liberty as well as *licence*. In any other country it would have been razed to the earth for private ends on public grounds. In England—odd, happy, free, resolute England—while it shows anything but an attraction to the casual passer-by, it is to the sensible and

reflecting observer a lasting memorial of the inalienable rights of the humblest subject.

But, to break off from this patriotic fit of digression. The landlord of the King's Head came out from under one of the signs of the times; offered to send the horse to the stables, and to procure another immediately; at the same time civilly requesting Dudley to enter his bar. To these propositions Ravensworth assented, and he was ushered into "mine host's" parlour—opening as it did by a glass window upon the tap-room, wherein were portraits of Lady Huntingdon, Tom Cribb, Pincher, and Sir Francis Burdett. Around a huge fire were assembled a large party of wayfarers and drovers. They were discussing some disturbances that had lately taken place in Hampshire.

"Depend upon it," said one, a sturdy-looking countryman, "if they don't give up the murderer of Gipsy Jack, they 'll burn Wingfield Manor House."

Dudley was attracted by these words.

"Ah, poor lady," continued the rough speaker, "she be poorly enou' wi'out that ; it 'ill be the death on her."

Dudley started at these words, and could not bear any suspense. He called the man on one side, and heard from him (under *coined* persuasion) particulars which in the ensuing chapter shall be laid before our readers. So important was the information in Dudley's estimation, that he mounted his unsound horse, dashed back to London, hastened to his own house, speeded all arrangements on the moment, and was on the road to Wingfield Manor House within an hour of the event we have related.

CHAPTER X.

WINTER AND ATTACK.

Lastly, came Winter cloathed all in frize,
Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill;
Whilst on his hoary beard his breath did freese.

SPENSER.

Cold grew the foggy morn, the day was brief;
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf!
The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods
Roar'd with strong blasts; with mighty showers, the
floods!

All green was vanish'd save of pine and yew,
That still displayed their melancholy hue;
Save the green holly, with its berries red,
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.

CRABBE.

THE winter was now fast closing in, and
threw an air of desolation on all around:

"Murky night soon follows hazy morn."

Constance felt the unprotected loneliness of her situation, and indescribable fears arose upon, and connected themselves with, the natural terrors which had long beset her. To mope by the fire of a solitary house on a long winter's evening; to hear the wind howling and moaning amongst the decayed walls and mighty trees; to be startled with the shaking of the ill-fastened doors and casements; to hear the rain splashing against the panes, and listen to the gale in the surrounding gloomy woods—formed the miserable occupation of the poor banished one. No other sound save the baying of the watch-dog broke the monotony, and this sullen variety of tone might well have been spared.

Nothing could exceed Lady Atherley's anxiety to live on good terms with the tenantry and neighbours; she was constantly employed in ministering to their wants and attending to their mental cultivation. She took every opportunity of improving their condition, of affording

every comfort to those in need, which their necessities might require. She showed kindness to the poor ; established a school for the orphan children ; but unfortunately all her efforts were unavailing. Lord Atherley's strict orders for the preservation of the game had rendered the family extremely unpopular. There had been constant affrays between the poachers and gamekeepers, in one of which a poacher had been desperately wounded. The gang had vowed vengeance against the perpetrators. Notices were posted against the premises, threatening a total destruction of the property if the obnoxious keepers were not immediately discharged. Nocturnal depredations were made on the out-buildings ; and, added to these, the neighbourhood had been suffering from the ravages of an epidemic disease. The absentee-ism of the principal landlords in the country, therefore—who leaving their affairs in the niggard hands of their stewards, had turned a deaf ear to the murmurs

of the people—rendered the districts more disturbed, and the threats of violence became louder and less ambiguous. Lady Atherley strove to conciliate ; but attempts at conciliation with an infuriated gathering of the people are but as oil upon the fire.

Christmas came,—that often described and ever joyous season of social intercourse, but it brought not its festivities. No song was heard, no light laugh thrilled through the halls, no interchange of kindred enjoyments took place. Christmas brings with it so many recollections of those days in which the mind, too young to feel the cares of life and too ingenuous for that suspicion of mankind which destroys the zest of social intercourse,—is open to none but impressions of delight, gratitude, and gladness ! The reminiscences of early life, which blend the rainbow visions of hope and youth with the religious feelings and innocent recreations akin to the time, give to this endeared season a hallowed and yet, at the

same time, an exhilarating aspect! Who, amongst our readers, has forgotten the encouraging smile of beloved parents,—now, perhaps no more,—as seated at the table, and surrounded by generation upon generation, all met together once a year, in full and perfect earthly society!—At this *congress* of the affections, who has forgotten the formidable *yule-log*, the tale, the dance, the game, the mince-pie, the spiced bowl? and then are not all these lighted by happy eyes, that shine then as though they “would never go out!”

The year was drawing to the close, as we have said;—dark December days, gloomy, and chill, and silent, followed each other in funeral procession. The ground was covered with snow, as with a pall; the horizon seemed laden with many storms; the cold, piercing cutting north-east wind moaned mournfully, sweeping the descending snow along. The hail, at times, rattled against the windows.

At the period of which we write, insubor-

dination and malcontent stalked through the frightened land, and the whole country blazed with incendiary fires. In the metropolis, Spa Fields was the scene of a murderous riot; the inflammatory harangues of traitors were heard in eternal public meetings; in the provinces the high price of provisions kept up the fearful excitement. The bewildered poor indulged in their usual incomprehensible system of political economy, and burned ricks to bring down the price of corn!

On one of these evenings Lady Atherley spent hour after hour in reviewing the past, and forming plans for the future. All the events of her past life glided spectre-like before her, and bitterly did she shudder at the contemplation of them. Her youthful gaiety and griefless beauty,—now where were they? In one brief year how many events had been consummated?—how many destinies fixed for ever? Her thoughts then turned from a sorrowing retrospect to a reflection upon her immediate

position ; and "there was no hope in it!" For some time she remained in silent meditation ; then, throwing herself upon her couch, she gave vent to her anguish in unrestrained and abundant tears. Time wore, and at last she heard the clock of the neighbouring church strike twelve. The last stroke had scarcely trembled away when she heard two shots fired in quick succession,—confused noises broke upon the night. Again some scattered shots were fired, and a roar of voices sounded, as if approaching nearer and nearer to the Manor House. In the first moment of alarm she would have rushed to the window, but flashes of light terrified her ; then, uncertain how to act, she listened, and again all was still.

The exalted heroism of woman is seldom evinced except on extraordinary occasions ; it is only in situations requiring the exercise of the most powerful energies, that she can divest herself of the habitual gentleness of her nature. When real occasions have presented themselves,

—when excited by the brightest virtues and noblest sympathies of human nature, “woman’s devotion” has, with a total forgetfulness of all personal feeling, carried her into and through dangers such as men would have thought it no shame to shrink from! What could exceed the undaunted courage and high-daring of Semiramis, Zenobia, Boadicea, Joan of Arc, the two Artimisias?—Artimisia, Queen of Halicarnassus, and of some neighbouring islands, followed Xerxes in his expedition against Greece. Her conduct at the battle of Salamis drew from the Persian monarch the remark, that on that day the men had behaved like women, and the women like men! It was at the sea-fight that the Persian king rewarded her with a splendid suit of armour, and, to mark the cowardice of the naval commander, sent him a distaff and a spindle! The examples of the devotion of women, in accompanying their husbands or lovers in perilous expeditions, in exile, in death, are beautifully

numerous :—Agrippina, wife of Germanicus; Isabella of Spain ; Madonna Taddea of Milan :—numerous, indeed, are the instances of female martyrs, attesting, with their death, the purity and the truth of “ woman’s devotion ! ”

But modern times are not eclipsed by the ancient days of female heroism. At the siege of Matagorda a memorable instance of female heroism occurred. A sergeant’s wife, named Retson, was in a casement with the wounded men, when a drummer-boy was ordered to fetch water from the well of the fort. On going out, the boy faltered under the severity of the fire ; upon which she took the vessel from him, and, although a shot *cut the bucket cord when in her hand*, she braved the terrible cannonade, and brought the water in safety to the wounded men !

The time had now come when Constance was called upon to “ dare do all that may become ” — a woman ; for incendiарism had brought its desolating torch to the threshold

of Wingfield Manor House. An hour passed away, and Constance, harassed and wearied by her fears and anxiety, was retiring to her room, when her attention was suddenly attracted by flashes of light which illuminated the passage. On opening the window-shutters, she perceived, with horror and astonishment, that the barn and hayricks were in flames. The barn, a mass of dense dun flame, sent up a column of black smoky vapour into the sky, and "shook its red shadow o'er the startled" trees. The reddening light against the casements, bursting out with the suddenness and fierceness of a loosened volcano, glared upon Constance's features, as she stood, startled at the outbreak of the fire.

While Constance stood appalled the building fell with a frightful crash, and an explosion of sparks and smoke flew circling and whirling upwards in dun red sparks; and then the conflagration became on the instant black and hardly perceptible. She now closed the win-

dow. Appalled, yet nerved by imminent danger,—“ See to the engines ! ” cried Lad Atherley to some of the affrighted servants th now entered the room.

At this moment there was a terrifying peal at the hall-door bell.

“ Run, Thomas, quick ! did you not hear the bell ? ”

“ Yes, my Lady,” replied the man.

“ Quick, quick ! send assistance to the farm — the Cobdens — ”

“ Oh, my Lady, don’t think of taking them in,” cried the housekeeper ; “ they ’ve caused all this *to do* ; we shall all be murdered by—”

“ They ’ve vowed vengeance against Mark for wounding Gipsy Jack,” said the bailiff.

“ Admit them without hesitation ; it would be cowardly to refuse shelter and protection to an honest family.”

The bailiff was about to make some reply, when they were startled by the scrambling

sound of horses' feet in the court-yard, and the ringing of the house-bell.

Constance sprang to the window. "Hush! I heard a sound!"

"It's only the wind blowing the branches against the casement, my Lady," replied the housekeeper: still she listened anxiously to every sound, nor did she listen long in vain: another peal sounded at the gate, so loud and long, that the domestics trembled with alarm. At last she fancied she caught the sound of Ravensworth's name.

"Ravensworth," faltered Constance, "surely it cannot be! Ravensworth! no, no, impossible!" Starting from her seat she awaited the approach of footsteps, while her heart beat with such violence that she was forced to lean for support against the wall.

It was Ravensworth! she saw him spring from his horse, drenched with the storm, his manner betraying the greatest anxiety. The

- gates were unbarred, the door was thrown open ; Ravensworth hastily entered. Constance became first deadly pale, and then flushed by the deepest crimson. Joy, fear, anxiety, doubt, were by turns depicted on her countenance ; but it became necessary that prompt measures should be taken to defend the house : at the mention of this, the house-keeper screamed, Mrs. Viney became hysterical, and the domestics, male and female, went through a similar ceremony.

Constance alone was silent, and Ravensworth was struck with admiration at her calmness and self-possession ; she looked anxious, but, instead of adding to the confusion, she assisted in summoning the servants, and describing, with the greatest exactness, the nature of the building and the cause of the attack. Ravensworth then drew around him those who had been able to provide themselves with arms, and arranged them so as to appear a formidable force in two ranks. No one uttered a word or

moved a step: it was a terrible suspense. Already voices might be heard nearing the entrance; and, by the rapid shuffling of feet, it was evident the infuriated populace were approaching. A yell of execration burst from them, in their eagerness to wreak their vengeance upon the inmates or servants of the house.

"Give up Mark Cobden," cried the hoarse voice of the ringleader, the terror of the country, known by the name of Black Will.

"Never!" exclaimed Ravensworth; "at the peril of your lives, advance! — we are armed."

"Forward, my lads!" cried the miscreant.

"Attention!" said Ravensworth; "make ready!"

The windows of the hall were now dashed in, and the door burst open; a fearful shriek from the women, mingled with the half-uttered and deep threats of the assailants, were blended together.

"Surrender, or we fire!" said Ravensworth, in a calm tone

"Never!" replied Black Will. "Defend yourselves! My lads, forward! Let us avenge our comrade, Gipsy Jack!" Almost before these words had passed his lips he had sprung from the window, and held a pistol to Ravensworth's head; at the same moment a shot was discharged at the ruffian from the corridor where the females had taken refuge, and he fell with a howl of pain. Meanwhile five or six of the gang had rushed into the room to aid their leader.

"Front rank, fire!" exclaimed Ravensworth. The shots whizzed through the air, and two of the poachers fell. Filled as the hall was with smoke, it became almost impossible to distinguish friend from foe. The groans of the wounded ringleader now struck Constance's ears; she approached him; he was in the agonies of death. The ruffian made a dying effort at revenge; the grasp of a large pocket-knife, and a plunge with his right hand, were but the work of a second. Ravensworth

rushed forward, averted the blow, which merely grazed its victim's arm, and the baffled hand fell, clutched and heavy, on the floor.

The head of Constance dropped lifeless on Dudley's shoulder, who at first thought that life was extinct. He bore her to the open casement, chafed her hands, sprinkled some water on her forehead, and called tenderly upon her name; but, for many minutes, no sign of animation returned. At length, a deep drawn sigh announced her return to life and consciousness. There was yet a wildness in her eyes and a nervous tremor in her frame, which showed the severity of the shock she had sustained. By degrees she recovered, though her mind still retained but a confused recollection of what had occurred.

"Save him, save him!" she cried, with an agonising sob.

"Calm yourself, Constance," whispered Ravensworth, gently; "you are safe; all is well."

Gradually a sense of the whole came over

her, and gratitude to Heaven and her preserver wholly occupied her mind.

It is wonderful how scenes of danger and of great excitement draw heart to heart, and bind together, in bonds indissoluble, those that have passed them, side by side. Ravensworth was now left alone with Lady Atherley; there was much to be told, much to be explained; he turned towards her with a silent smile, and found her eyes fixed upon him, with a deep and intense gaze; she dropped them as soon as they met his, but that one look proved that the whole thought and feeling of her heart were concentrated in him, and in all she owed him. He advanced towards her, took her hand, and pressed it to his lips. Constance lifted up her eyes.

"Oh, Dudley," she said, "what do I not owe you?" She burst into tears.

"You owe me nothing," Dudley replied.

"Would to Heaven that it were in my

power to prove to you the extent of my gratitude."

"I am *your* debtor still," exclaimed Ravensworth, whose joy was boundless. "How can I ever repay you?"

These words, the plaintive modulation of her voice, the beautiful expression of gratitude in her radiant countenance, the tear that rose to her eyes, were at once fatally decisive, and Dudley poured forth the impassioned sentiments of a fervid and overwhelming love. He told her how unchanged and unchangeable his affection for her was,—how it had increased in spite of himself,—how he had struggled to subdue it,—how deeply and ardently he loved her. But how shall we express the power of that eloquence which bursts forth from the surprised heart in a crisis of deep feeling and deep distress? Words, on these occasions, seem to have lost all their power and changed all their acceptations. During

this terrible and entrancing conflict the “still small voice” was hardly audible : every word he uttered vibrated to her heart like a chord of sweet music ; yet a shudder passed over her, and she burst into a flood of tears, weak, womanly tears—how fatal in their power and their danger !

Here would we willingly drop a veil over this dark page of our history !—

Oh ! too convincing—dangerously dear—
In woman’s eye the unanswerable tear !

* * * * *
Avoid it—Virtue ebbs and Wisdom errs,
Too fondly gazing on that grief of hers !

Tears, that once changed the destiny of the world, now cost our heroine “ her peace on earth, her hope in Heaven !”—How vain were it to attempt to describe the pangs, the doubts, the fears, the struggles, the endless irritation of her disordered mind ! Driven to despair,—unsupported now by principle ; every domestic

tie broken,—all good resolutions wrecked! where,—what was she? He who saved her from the ruffian's blow had better have left her to her fate! An unsullied grave had been preferable to an erring life! In the hour which had seen Constance “fall from her high estate,” in that hour, her husband's star had set for ever.

The morning came, and oh, what a lovely morning! the sun rose brightly and cloudlessly, tinting all objects with its gorgeous colouring. Constance awoke, and thought that the day was a mockery of light! Never did nature look more beautiful in itself—or sad to her. Remorse had secured one more victim, to undergo the Promethean fate!

CHAPTER XI.

DEATH OF LORD AATHERLEY.

Thou bid'st me dry my tearful eyes ;
But hast thou ever shed those tears,
In each of which such sorrow lies—
As might compress the woe of years ?
Oh ! hast thou felt what 'tis to sigh,
And weep o'er bliss for ever fled ;
To long, and yet to fear to die,
When every hope is crush'd and dead !
No ! hadst thou ever felt that woe,
That aching void, that agony—
Which causes these wild tears to flow,
And makes me heave this sobbing sigh ;
Thou would'st not bid me dry the tear ;
For thou would'st know it was in vain,
Alas ! alas ! as vain it were,
As bid me cherish hope again.

MRS. FAIRLIE.

A FRESH trial awaited Constance. On the following morning, she had scarcely seated herself

at breakfast, when the servant presented her with a letter. The broad black edge at once attracted her attention ; and at the first glance at the address she perceived it to be the handwriting of Mr. Cresswell, Lord Atherley's man of business. She gazed at it with sudden apprehension ; a dreadful presentiment filled her mind,—a deadly sickness of the soul seized her ! Lost in a strange abstraction of mind, she stood rivetted to the spot. At length she summoned resolution to break the seal ; the letter informed her of Lord Atherley's death, having been suddenly seized with apoplexy in Paris. It will be remembered that immediately after the ill-omened day on which Lord Atherley had acted so severe a part to Lady Atherley, he had hurried from London, the associations of which were no longer endurable. In the French metropolis, whither he had repaired, he perseveringly endeavoured by drinking the poisoned chalice of dissipation to drug himself into oblivion of the past, and for a time he

succeeded in banishing care, but at length fell a victim to his intemperance, having been suddenly carried off in a fit of apoplexy. With what overpowering sensations Lady Atherley read the enclosed note from Lord Atherley, it would be difficult to describe. It was dated the day he left England; it urged her "to blot from her recollection all remembrance of the past, and enclosed a deed restoring her the sum he had received as her marriage-portion!" Stunned by the shock she had received, hours passed away whilst yet Constance sat pale and motionless as a statue, as if under the influence of a frightful dream; her heart throbbed violently; reproaches, anger, she could have borne; but kindness, forgiveness, generosity, from one she had so deeply injured, had totally disarmed her. She wept bitter tears of repentance; for where is the heart so hardened that does not feel a severe pang at the voice of unmerited kindness? A voice that *would* be

heard spoke to her of broken vows! Never had she felt so acutely the humiliation of her own fallen condition; her imagination became excited to a feverish degree, she would have given worlds to have recalled the past month. Now, she was banished from the world! She saw what she *might* have been; she felt what she *was*. The remembrance of all the consideration she had formerly received, the position she had once held, contrasted with the blight she had brought upon herself, was more than woman's nature could support. Her head became dizzy,—she fell to the ground. On her recovery, after a long period of unconsciousness, she felt the necessity of rousing her drooping energies. The funeral was to take place at Compton Audley. To mourn the death of such a man as Lord Atherley would scarcely be possible in any one not severely interested, but there still existed in the gentle heart of Constance a feeling of kind

regret and compassion. She had freely forgiven his ill-treatment of herself ; and, indeed, her own conduct had rendered all her sufferings but the stern retribution of justice.

A funeral in the country is much more impressive than in the midst of a large city, where, in the bustle and distraction of active life, we lose a proper sense of its warning and solemnity. The morning was ushered in by the heavy tolling church bell, “swinging slow with solemn roar” its solitary knell. The shops of the principal tradesmen were closed ; groups of the inhabitants were scattered about ; some few out of respect, but by far the greater part from curiosity. Awe and silence at death, rather than for the dead, prevailed. The villagers spoke to one another in whispers, as they clustered about the church doors. There was no tear in any eye—no sorrow in any heart. Yet there was the aspect of sorrow on all around. The mansion looked forlorn and de-

solate ; every shutter was closed ; the body was borne slowly from its gates, beneath the sable plumes of a hearse ; the carriages and noble horses of the deceased followed, as if in mockery of his present state ; a procession of coaches of the neighbouring gentry, with the customary trappings of woe, brought up the rear. Strange that man's vanity should follow him to the final earthly house ; that he should still surround himself with the empty pomp of heraldry, the insignia of rank and power, when reduced to that state which levels all distinctions,—where the slave is on an equality with the monarch. On reaching the family mausoleum a hushing silence reigned among the assemblage. The coffin, in all the pomp of crimson velvet, gilt plate, and nails, was lowered into the earth. The voice of the reader was heard ; the solemn service of the dead was performed ; the rattling of the dust on the coffin announced its close. The stone was

placed on the sepulchre, and the home appointed for all clay had received another link from the long-living line of a noble house.

The funeral obsequies being completed, Lady Atherley returned to Wingfield Manor. The excitement—misery—she had lately undergone, were more than her frame could bear. She was seized with a violent illness, and for some days her life was in danger,—truly mournful was her condition. The physician who had been called in to attend her did not hesitate to pronounce her complaint an affection of the lungs, softening the case, however, as much as possible, by the assurance that there was no immediate fear of danger: still there were symptoms of a consuming of the frame.

Ravensworth had in the mean time been called to Ireland to receive a father's last sigh. This mournful call could not be disobeyed, and Dudley hastened to Dublin, but

too late. His father had expired, and he heard himself greeted as Sir Dudley Ravensworth. Impatient to return to the dear and widowed mourner, he remained no longer in Ireland than was necessary to attend the funeral of his parent. At length they met. We pass over Lady Atherley's early widowhood, her remorse, her slow recovery of health, her retirement from the world. Time travelled on. She accepted Ravensworth, trusting "his unfailing love would guide, and support, and cheer her to the end."

As soon as a twelvemonth had elapsed, the marriage between Lady Atherley and Sir Dudley Ravensworth took place at the village church. No pomp was added to the ceremony. The bonds she now entered into were not hallowed by a parent's blessing, or her own unshadowed happiness; and yet when she thought of Dudley's devotion, a gleam of faint joy stole over her soul. She felt, and fondly

hoped, that the congeniality of their minds and dispositions, which now existed, would endure for ever, and that nothing but death would sever the vows plighted between them !

Those of our readers who have followed our heroine through her previous ill-fated career to the period when brighter prospects dawned upon her, and who, according to marriages in modern novels, anticipated that Lady Atherley enjoyed unmixed happiness, and was adored by Dudley, and that the days glided on in blissful content, blessed in each other's affection.

— “ Happiest of their kind
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend ; ”

or, in the words of old novelists, “ that they flourished long in tender bliss, and reared a numerous offspring, lovely like themselves,

the grace of all the country around ;”— we
counsel to close the page, that they may be
spared—

“ That hideous sight—a naked human heart.”

CHAPTER XII.

TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

O Caledonia, stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child !
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain, and the flood !

WALTER SCOTT.

RAVENSWORTH seemed to have now attained the height of his wishes ; he was in possession of the only woman whom he had ever loved, still there were moments when he was not happy. A year had nearly elapsed since the event mentioned in the last chapter—bringing with it the numerous revolutions which time

produces upon all human nature ; Ravensworth and his bride had travelled through many parts of England without any definite object in view ; wearied with continual change, it was among the wild beauties of Scotland that they sought seclusion. The summer had commenced, and they set out alone on their intended excursion.

Nothing material happened during their journey ; the weather was fine, and, exhilarated by the change of air and scene, Constance experienced a buoyancy of spirits to which she had long been a stranger. Occasionally a sigh was wrung from her by bitter recollection ; she could not lull the past utterly,—could not quiet “the worm that never dies !” In solitude, fallen as she was in her own esteem, with tears streaming from her eyes, with bursting sobs that shook her whole frame, she thought of him she had wronged !

Constance had all that feeling for the beauties of nature which belongs to a refined taste, romantic imagination, and cultivated mind ;

every object was new and interesting to her,—and the prospect of her northern tour was a constant source of delight and hope. Dudley shared in her enjoyment; his affection was the sunshine of her existence. When a woman truly loves, she moulds her tastes and views to those of the object of her affection. She sees with *his* eyes,—she feels with *his* feelings. Our travellers reached the Scottish lakes, and nowhere could a spot have been found better suited for peaceful retirement from the world's gaze than Glengaelloch — the *one* they had selected. Their cottage was romantically situated between Inveruglas and the point of Firkin. To the left, amid a profusion of thickets, knolls, and crags, lay the bed of a broad mountain lake; high hills, rocks, and banks, waving with natural forests of oak and birch, formed the borders of this enchanting sheet of water.

On the right all was deep solitude, no trace appeared of any living thing save now

and then a red deer springing from a thicket, or an eagle towering down the glen. A mountain burn was visible, as far as the eye could reach,—hurling its waters downwards from the mountain, contracted sometimes between narrow defiles and dark chasms,—sometimes enlarged, obstructed by craggy rocks, and foaming among the fragments which seemed to have been cleft for its course. From a lofty wooded precipitous rock, Nature presented to the eye one of the most surpassingly beautiful, wild, and sublime views imaginable ! Here were rough quarries, rocks, and hills,—whose “heads touch heaven.” Glengaelloch was nothing but an unpretending cottage residence : it contained three rooms on the ground floor, with corresponding ones above. A few acres of garden, and a paddock, formed the grounds ; and the little boundaries once passed, all around and beyond was rude, barren, and boundless. Placed at the extremity of a deep sequestered glen, the

little cottage seemed to be the presiding spirit of peace over the spot.

Constance and Dudley wandered through the wild and lovely regions, listening to ancient Highland stories, and entering into all the partizanship of clanship and wild chivalry. There was a soul in the scene,—there was an old romance in every thing,—in every blue mountain and bright lake,—in the dark chasms, in the deep ravine,—the wild and rocky alpine glen,—the cascade thundering down the mountain side,—the river chafing its way through its obstructed channel—amid rocks and trees,—a charm gilded alike the present and the past, and caused the heart to beat at the name of the musterings and gatherings of the tartaned heroes of an uncouth but daring age. The pen of the mighty Magician of the North had thrown an enchantment over these scenes, which the scenes themselves heightened, while they welcomed it. No heart could turn itself loose over such spots, once so patriotically and

widely peopled, and not "warm to the tartan." In their rambles Dudley and Constance found an indescribable pleasure in contemplating the grand variety of nature, and the magnificent and abrupt forms in which it was her fantastic humour to appear.

The "bright lake of lovely islands," the paragon of the Scottish lakes, Loch Lomond, now burst upon them; the vast expanse of water to the south,—with its numerous islands, some of them enriched by nature with woods and rocks, and peopled with red deer; some cultivated by the hand of man into a fair and fertile land of fields of corn; and others, mere barren rocks (here and there a straggling shrub or tree), was all before them. The northern extremity of the lake narrows away until it is lost among dusky and retreating mountains, which overshadow its waters as it penetrates the Arroguhar hills; and all is bounded by the lofty Ben Lomond, who rises majestically, rearing his broad and gigantic bulk, like an

Atlas, to the sky ! The eastern side, which is peculiarly rough and rugged, was formerly the chief seat of Macgregor and his clan. Occupying a district almost inaccessible, when roads were unknown and the country more wooded, the Macgregors were enabled to carry on a cruel as well as a predatory system of warfare on the surrounding clans; forcing contributions under the title of “black mail.” But it would be vain to attempt to describe scenes, fitted only for the *one* pen, or the artist’s pencil, and which can hardly bear to be tamed into description.

The wanderers scarcely spoke to each other, so charmed were they by the air of stillness and solemnity around them : their dreamy associations were not materialised by any thoughts of busy every-day life ; they felt the poetry, which external nature in the hour of twilight majestically creates !

“ I love thee, twilight ! as thy shadows roll,
The calm of evening steals upon the soul ;

Sublimely tender, solemnly serene,
Still as the hour, enchanting as the scene !
Twilight I love thee,—let thy glooms increase
Till every feeling,—every pulse—is peace !”

At the time of which we write, steamboats were not to be seen, as now they are,—daily plying, freighted with human loads from the land of Cockayne, all flaunting in tartans—which they confound with plaids,—while the citizen from Tooley Street “ wi’ his fat wame ” in a short Hieland coat, and his puir short houghs gartered below the knee, like a “ lang legged gilly,” surprises the North. Now, indeed, southern folks and their progenies, rejoicing in the euphonious sounding names of Stubbs, Thompson, Smith, and Brown ; dressed in the “ Highland garb ” from the ready-made establishments and juvenile repositories in the classical purlieus of Cranbourn Alley, wend to the land of cakes. A blazing suit of scarlet velvet tartan, the “ belted plaid ” of divers colours (an illegitimate offspring which

the weavers, backed by the ladies and haberdashers, have lately fashioned, and which bids defiance to all classification), the bonnet adorned with ostrich plumes, like an undertaker's horse; these form the costume of the brief travellers. Haberdashers, bred and born within the sound of Bow bells, singing, " My 'art's in the 'ighlands, my 'art is not 'ere;" attorneys and merchants' clerks,—forming their ideas of Scotch costume from the conspicuous representations at the doors of tobacconists' shops; "kilted to the knee," petticoated, plaided, plumed, pursed, buckled, pistol'd, dirk'd and sworded,—blustering about the Children of the Mist, and gathering their ideas of the "land of flood and mountain," from the Surrey theatre version of the Lady of the Lake, and the Covent Garden dramas of Rob Roy and Guy Mannering, "fright the isle from her propriety." Many a milliner, or *millinerette*, from the neighbourhood of Temple Bar or Charing Cross, decked out in tartan gowns, tartan

bonnets, tartan boots, and with tartan parasols,—is on an excursion for the purpose of fancying herself on Loch Cateran—

“A guardian Naiad of the *Strand*.”

Plodding antiquaries,—crazy sentimentalists,—silly sight-seers,—romantic view-hunters,—cockney literati,—Bond Street loungers,—all are predatory on Scotland’s magic scenes now, and pay to be guided to where Fitzjames had his first interview with the daughter of Douglas, and to the Coir-nan Uriskin, where the angel “hymn of Ellen” was raised to heaven. Groups pic-nic on Rob Roy’s rock, or drink tea on Inch Cailliach. In truth, Watt and Sir Walter have, by means of the paddle and the pen, made to all Loch Lomond, Bealnam-bo, Loch Cateran, the Uaighmor, the Clachan of Aberfoil, Salisbury Craigs, and the Western Isles of Perthshire, familiar as household words.

But to our tale. There is a very wide

difference between admiring the picturesque beauty of a cottage from without, and being domiciled within: in this case the husk is fairer than the *kernel*. For the first few weeks after their arrival at their new residence, Dudley met with a corresponding glow all the warmth of feeling which Constance (happy to escape from the noise and turmoil of society) felt at the beauty of their sweet retired vale; but this was a state of feeling that too soon vanished, for ennui finds entrances into every scene when the gloss of novelty is over. A few weeks served to make Ravensworth weary of the confinement to which he had subjected himself; and then he grew peevish with Constance, as though *she* were the cause of this temporary and wearying northern exile. He gradually grew discontented at all the internal deficiencies about him, and pined for the luxuries of home, and the *agrémens* of general society. He discovered that the windows rattled,—that the chimneys smoked,—that

the doors would not close,—that the meals were cheerless, early, and unpunctual ; and that the dining-room was a cell, the cottage a hut ! Out of doors, too, the causes of discontent were equally great. The wind was never at rest, except to give the mists a turn. The day came too soon, and the evening light went to rest too rapidly ; there was something tiresomely monotonous in the cry of the eagle, and irritatingly startling in the unwarned burst of the red deer ! The charm of novelty was over, and all around was familiar.

Dudley became weary of the insipidity and dulness of the monotonous life to which he had subjected himself, and was now impatient to return to London. Constance cheerfully assented ; for with her, too, there was an aching wish for change. It was not a craving for gaiety that her spirit yearned for ; it was for social intercourse, the communion of even one kindred soul. While Dudley was with her, Constance

wanted no other society ; but he now usually left her to spend the mornings alone. They were generally passed, indeed, in recollections which could not be shared by a stranger ; yet there are seasons when the oppressed heart will borrow aid from the cheerfulness of others. It was then that she fervently wished that she possessed one friend, or even companion, to cheer her too lonely hours. She thought of the many friendships shown to her in her days of innocence, till —

———— “ softness crept
Into those eyes, which like an infant's wept.”

It was now decided that they should only remain one fortnight longer, to be present at a Highland gathering, where the sports were to consist of hurling the stone, throwing the hammer, foot racing, ending with a dinner and a ball, at which all the neighbourhood were to be present, and of which Mrs. Lumsden, Lady Atherley's nearest neighbour, was a pa-

troness : but chance often overturns our wisest plans, or, as Burns expresses it —

“ The best laid schemes of mice and men,
Gang aft a gley.”

The arrival of two strangers of note, with their carriages, horses, and servants, had created a general commotion in the neighbourhood. The laird's family, as the Lumsdens of Loch Swinnie, were called, were “ away north,” when Lady Atherley and Ravensworth arrived at Glengaeloch ; but the day after their return, they left cards at the cottage. Lady Atherley had returned the visit, but with such “ an exchange of cards,” as led to no meeting ; all civilities had ended. In her rambles she had more than once encountered them ; on these occasions, however, a slight bow was all the recognition that ensued. At first, Constance, not disposed to view her neighbours with a fastidious eye, doubted, or rather tried to doubt, how far the coolness was intentional,

when a circumstance occurred that decided the question. One day, accompanied by Dudley, she entered a shop,— the one comprehensive shop of the village,— just at the moment Mrs. and Miss Lumsden were occupied in making a purchase. Constance slightly coloured ; — Mrs. Lumsden civilly made way, gave a formal curtsey, and, with her daughter, passed to the other side of the universal mart, and hurried out. Constance felt deeply wounded. Anxious to contribute to Ravensworth's amusement, she had encouraged his remaining until after the meeting, and had on the previous day written to Mrs. Lumsden to request tickets for the dinner and ball ; no answer had been received, and she had fully anticipated receiving them on this unexpected meeting. Dudley broke the silence. The rising in Constance's throat scarcely allowed her to articulate. Ravensworth bit his lips till the blood came ; and they walked on.

The past, the present, and the future, like

adverse currents, met within her brain, and eddied there in wild confusion. There is no greater retribution that falls upon female errors than the desertion of female friends, and none of so sure a visitation.

"No,—gayer insects fluttering by
Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die:
And lovelier things have mercy shown
To every failing but their own,
And every woe a tear can claim
Except an erring sister's shame."

Constance had experienced this: the time had been when friends and relatives would have crowded round her in weal or woe. Where were they now? One by one had deserted her. Had she not felt that she deserved the cold hand and the averted eye, she might have despised the world's opinion, but she was not seared sufficiently, nor her heart hardened, to brave its scorn. Deep and sincere remorse pressed upon her. Too mild to murmur, too gentle to resist, she suffered all in silence; the humbled creature uttered not a syllable of

complaint ; from the loneliness of her position, destitute as she was of relatives, almost of acquaintances, she felt herself an isolated being.

It was with the greatest reluctance, and with tears in her eyes that on the occasion we have alluded to, she confessed to her husband the mortification she felt at the slights thrown upon her ; at the neglect of her dear and early friends ; at being an outcast from society.

“ Pshaw, Constance ! ” said Dudley, turning away ; “ is this all ? why reproach *me* ? why torment *me* with useless regrets ? ” his lip quivered, his countenance varied ; he hastily trod the apartment.

“ Did I ever offer you a reproach ? ” replied Constance, shrinking.

“ I did not say you did,” he replied, “ but there are in the tears of some women more cutting reproaches than in the imprecations of others. You know I hate to see you shed tears.”

" You seldom see me shed them : I rein my feelings better ; yes, *once I did*, and the remembrance haunts me still." This reproach was no sooner uttered, than she felt how ungenerous she had been, and in a soft relenting voice, said, " Forgive me, forgive me, dearest ! "

The sternness of Ravensworth's brow gradually relaxed, conscious of his own injustice, he felt that he had wronged his wife ; and, anxious to make an atonement, folded her in his arms. Constance replied by a fond embrace.

" Regard me with your former confidence," said Dudley, " and all will be well ! "

" Believe me," replied Constance tenderly, " I will ! I will conquer every emotion. I will endeavour to be all you wish."

" Thou art thyself, dearest," said Dudley, subdued by the kindness of her voice and manner. These and many other expressions of endearment passed between them, and thus

for the present the cloud was chased away; alas! only too soon to revisit them again.

The following day saw their departure from Glengaelloch. After devoting a few days to Edinburgh, they proceeded slowly towards England. Nothing of any consequence happened during the first nine days of their journey, for in those days railroads were only in the future tense. As they approached within two stages of the metropolis, Ravensworth's spirits became elated, and Constance shared his gratification; but her joy speedily gave way to feelings of a very different order. Towards the end of the day, the carriage, owing to the negligence of the post-boys, came in violent contact with a waggon, and was overturned. Constance was considerably hurt, and was compelled to alight at a miserable wayside public-house, where the Robin Hood swings and creaks its invitation to man and beast.

Just as Ravensworth was about to despatch

the post-boy to London for surgical assistance, a carriage stopped at the door, attracted by the crowd assembled round the broken vehicle, which the village blacksmith was trying to "put to rights."

"What has happened?" cried a voice from within the newly-arrived carriage—"can I be of any service?"

Ravensworth, who was at the door, fancied he recognised the voice, and approached,— "Darval!" "Ravensworth!" exclaimed the two together.

Darval alighted.

"I hope," said he, "Lady Atherley has not suffered from the accident?"

"A little bruised and shaken, but I trust nothing of consequence," replied Dudley.

"Pray make use of my carriage," continued Darval; "the clamour of this wretched inn will distract Lady Atherley."

After much preliminary matter it was finally arranged that Lady Atherley and her

maid should proceed to London in Darval's carriage, and that he and Sir Dudley should follow the moment the broken carriage was sufficiently repaired for the journey.

CHAPTER XIII.

LADY AHERLEY UNHAPPY.

Ever note, Lucilius,
When love begins to sicken and decay,
It useth an enforced ceremony ;
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith.

Julius Cæsar.

Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
And Constance was beloved no more,—
"Tis an old tale, and often told.

Marmion.

BYRON says,

" Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
" 'Tis woman's whole existence ! "

ue it is, that the passion which makes up the
ole of a woman's existence, is but one among

the many which constitute that of a man ; and though men may love as passionately, they seldom love as disinterestedly, and never as devotedly. With men, love takes its place in the ranks of the many passions which are gathered in their breasts ; with women, it is the chief, and gives its tone to all their thoughts and feelings.

Constance one afternoon, on their return to England, had been led to expect Dudley at two o'clock ; when the clock struck half-past three, she began to experience the most painful anxiety. Ravensworth had never before forfeited his word. Whenever he had promised to be at home at a particular hour, at that hour he had invariably returned. She chided herself for her impatience, and conceived numerous excuses for him. Four o'clock came, and no tidings of him. She went to the piano, with a view of distracting her thoughts, but they "would not be commanded ;" she was unable to fix herself to

any favourite air. The clock struck five: "this is strange and unkind," thought Constance, but she instantly checked the thoughts; for she would not encourage the idea of his unkindness for an instant. She opened one of Byron's volumes, which, however, failed to interest her, except painfully; still she kept her eyes fixed upon its pages until the clock struck six. She arose, and paced the room, in a hurried search after patience and firmness; at one time she felt she was neglected, at the next she would inwardly chide herself for attaching danger or neglect to an absence which some chance and unavoidable circumstance had suddenly occasioned. Constance rang the bell.

"Did Sir Dudley leave any message for me?"

"No, my Lady."

"Did he say when he should return?"

"No, my Lady."

"Did he say whether he dined at home?"

“ No, my Lady.”

“ Did he order his horses ?”

“ No, my Lady.”

The consequential respondent in powder was about to retire, when it occurred to him that a little mystification would promote him in the estimation of his mistress. “ Sir Dudley went into his room to answer a note, brought by a French person.”

Lady Atherley paused.

“ Very well, Thomas, let me know when your master returns.”

Constance walked her anxious watch, in a state of mind painful and perplexing in the extreme ; her fears triumphed over her reason ; a thousand apprehensions were conceived in an instant ; some accident she now felt sure had occurred, or he certainly would have apprised her of the cause of his absence, or returned home. She rang the bell, and desired the footman to get into the first coach he met, and hasten to White’s.

"Simply inquire if Sir Dudley is there, and return to me as quickly as possible." The servant stared, but immediately proceeded on his errand. Constance now opened the window, and went out on the balcony, listening to every footstep and vehicle that approached. At length a coach stopped at the portico; she flew to the room door; a single knock was given, and her heart sank within her; the door was opened. The footman entered to convey the intelligence that Sir Dudley had left White's an hour before.

"Hark!" cried Constance; "I heard a carriage!" darting eagerly to the window, as a coach drove up to the door; the coachman slowly descended from the box, and knocked loudly. Constance could scarcely breathe, but when, on the door being opened, she saw Dudley alight, she sank down upon a chair, offering up her silent gratitude. Before she had risen Dudley entered the room, and seeing her distress embraced her affectionately:

For some moments Constance was unable to speak.

"Dearest!" said Constance, at length, faintly; "you look ill, I fear something dreadful has occurred!"

"No: nothing of importance."

"Say that nothing serious has happened," continued Constance anxiously.

"Nothing has happened, upon my honour!" She still watched his countenance, still urged her fears. He kindly but coldly replied to her passionate fervour, and deeply wounded by the alteration of his manner, she fixed on him a look of sadness, and turned away with a deep sigh. How truly might she in her heart's disappointment have exclaimed, "Have I not tried and striven, and failed to bind one true heart unto me, whereon my own might find a resting place, a home for all its burden of affections!" She had consumed her existence in vain yearnings for some object to call forth the full devotions

of her nature ; she had given her heart to one who had repaid her affection with apathy, her hopes with disappointment. Poor Constance ! with what humiliation did she feel the symptoms of coldness, the forced manner, the unconcealed indifference of Ravensworth ; and now the truth flashed upon her mind ; she felt that he had married her from a point of honour — from pity ! She revolted from the idea of being a burthen to him ; or of owing to his commiseration that which his love denied. “ Ah ! ” writes Madame de Sevigné, “ ah jamais, jamais, je ne serai pas aimée comme j'aime ! ” such a feeling took possession of Constance.

Constance was not slow in remarking the gradual advance of coolness and reserve betrayed through the manner of Ravensworth towards her ; and though she was most sedulous in banishing her sad surmises, in spite of her best efforts to repel them they still obtruded themselves on her attention ! At

first she decided on seeking an explanation, but there was something in the character of Ravensworth which withheld her from disclosing to him her suspicions; she shrank from confiding her distrust and misgiving to one so proud and tenacious as Dudley. Should the justice of her terrors be acknowledged, what a cloud of misery would burst over her head—believing herself to be, as she had believed, the only object of his affection, and knowing that she had no other earthly tie to bind her to the world. Then came the corroding thought, “that had he married a woman whom he respected, on *her* he would have lavished his whole heart.” Silence, and the making herself the exorcist of the demon suspicion, was her only alternative, and it was one which suited but too well her character, now subdued and bowed down to the dust by humiliation and grief. She tried to lay the “flattering unction to her soul” that a too anxious love had conjured up in her breast evils which existed

not ; but she never could absolve herself from the inward conviction, that her own conduct had destroyed her power of securing a permanent and respectful affection. Then, too, the very steadiness and ardour of her feelings, acting as a constant reproach to Ravensworth, instead of recalling his wandering feelings, only irritated and repulsed them.

Strong in her own love, Lady Atherley forgot that, by moving in the society of the heartless and the dissipated, her defenceless position as a neglected wife made her an object too interesting to be considered with indifference by the flatterers that surrounded her. The voice of admiration which everywhere pursued her did not excite in her a momentary gratification. Amongst those whose attentions, under the name of friendship to her husband, had attracted the remark of the world, was Sidney Darval. The approach to intimacy, though it had been keenly remarked by others, and watchfully recorded, had been so gradual, that not a

thought ever crossed Constance's mind as to the danger that lurked in such an intercourse. It is true that, as her husband's friend, he was ever by her side—at the drive, the dinner, or the *soirée*, but his manner was perfectly unobtrusive.

Sidney Darval was a most fascinating man, and to a very prepossessing person was added a polished manner, that won at once the regard and attention of those who conversed with him. He had travelled much, and resided long abroad, and had been a cherished favourite at foreign courts. In Paris he had been formerly thrown into Dudley's society, and though he had there seen but little of him, the renewal of their acquaintance on the road to London, and under the circumstance we recorded in our last chapter, was an unexpected pleasure. An intimacy immediately ensued, and Ravensworth and Darval soon became great friends, or what the world calls such. To the *blasé* Ravensworth, the society of Darval pos-

sessed a charm of no ordinary kind. Darval was a professed man of pleasure. With a cool and calculating head, he possessed a corrupt heart; and, without any principles of honour, was egregiously vain of his family and fortune. The ruling passion of his life was to succeed with the sex; he lived but for "*bonnes fortunes.*" Spoiled by his success on the Continent, where his wealth and personal attractions had rendered him irresistible, he returned to England with the conqueror's motto, "*Veni, vidi, vici.*" His boast was that he had never yet found a woman who could resist his seductive attractions and attentions. As an enthusiastic admirer of female beauty, that of his friend's wife struck him with admiration, and in a little time excited in him a passion. Specious and insinuating in his address, he ever bore towards Constance the semblance of being the possessor of the strictest virtue. His conversations were calculated to encourage her confidence, though at the same time this accomplished dis-

sembler was with the greatest art attempting to infuse into her mind the poison of his pernicious sentiments. He possessed the finished qualities of an accomplished scoundrel; had a good share of impudence, not a little hypocrisy, unbounded falsehood, and a cool pertinacity not easily to be rebuffed.

But to return to Ravensworth; a face less beautiful, a form less perfect, a mind less elevated, and a heart less pure, had, in truth, diverted his passion, (for we will not contaminate the word love,) from the confiding Constance. Emilie St. Phar, then a distinguished *danseuse*, had dazzled and won him! Lost amidst the fashionable mazes of error, led into every species of dissipation, drawn into a vortex of extravagant follies, sunk into degradation, he, day after day, more submissively yielded to the dangerous and seductive influence of a designing woman. Ravensworth, the once noble, high-minded Ravensworth, drank deep of the poisoned cup of pleasure, and became

a slave to the fascinations of a heartless, foreign coquette. The wily ensnarer held dominion over her victim, and commanded with all the tyranny of vice. Two months had passed, of which every day had found him encircled by the spells of the enchantress. At home, Dudley evinced a restlessness of spirit, which nothing could allay; an irritability of temper, which made him fretfully desire constant change. In his home he appeared a stranger; at times, when alone, he resolved "to be a wiser and a better man;" but to make resolutions in the absence of a devoted being, and put them in practice in her presence, are widely different! Resolutions thus formed on impulse, and not on principle, vanished as rapidly as they were formed.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MILLINER.

I, who should shield thy unprotected head,
'Tis I—who doom thee to severest pains!—
Of all thy gifts, lo! these the bitter gains!
Ah! left of every friend, save me alone,
I swell thy tear, I deepen every groan,
I,—to whom nought on earth,—but hopeless life remains.

SOTHERY.

Ad humum mærore gravi deducit et angit.

Hon. *Ars Poet.* V. 110.

Grief wrings her soul, and binds it down to earth.

FRANCIS.

We tarry in London. And here we must
enter upon a new scene.

Extended at full length upon an easy
couch, lay a middle-aged though still beau-
tiful woman, a perfect specimen of “*la femme*

à la mode." In her house was everything in the very best taste. "Rosalie, va donc voir quelle heure il est à la pendule du salon, ma montre est arrêtée."

"Midi moins un quart, Madame," said the trusty Abigail on her return.

"Déjà!"

"Oui, Madame."

"Rosalie, je n'y suis pour personne ; entendez vous?"

"Oui, Madame," replied the attentive *femme-de-chambre*.

These instructions were scarcely given when the door bell was rung, and Madame Anastasie almost immediately afterwards announced. How would it be possible to refuse Madame Anastasie, with her splendid assortment of shawls, lace, furs, ribbons, silks, velvets, levantines, figured muslins, China crape, gros de Naples, brocaded silks, and all the paraphernalia of a milliner's warehouse, compressed into an oiled-skin basket box.

" Oh, good morning !" said Madame de la Minauderie, rising languidly from her sofa.
" What beautiful lace ! but really I am so poor now, that,"—

" Not of the least consequence," interrupted Madame Anastasie, " you look truly charming in that pelerine !" Madame de la Minauderie smiled languidly. " But my lady, do look at this beautiful scarf ; I have just bought it à bien bon marché for Sir Dudley Ravensworth. Madame le Grand, who brought it from Paris, would scarcely let me have it. ' C'est tout ce qu'il y a de plus nouveau.' "

" Ah, for Lady Atherley ! I have a note for her. Are you going to Brook Street ?"

" No Madame. I go, but I depend upon your discretion, to the Marché au foin,—Haymarket. Voilà l'adresse, Mademoiselle Emilie St. Phar, No. 60, Haymarket."

" Charming !" replied the Baronne, " the immaculate Dudley ! c'est vraiment une aventure délicieuse."

"Mais, Madame, je me fie à votre discréption," said Madame Anastasie.

"Vous pouvez y compter;" responded the Baroness.

Madame la Baronne de la Minauderie's character may be easily described in the words of Marmontel. "Une coquette est un tyran qui veut tout asservir pour le seul plaisir d'avoir des esclaves. D'elle-même idolâtre, tout le reste ne lui est rien; son orgueil se fait un jeu de notre foiblesse et un triomphe de nos tourmens: ses regards mentent, sa bouche trompe, son langage et sa conduite ne sont qu'un tissu de pièges, ses graces sont autant de sirènes, ses charmes autant de poisons." With an unconquerable spirit of coquetry she united a playful imagination, her person was very beautiful, and she had a fascination of manner that made her irresistible; her whole aim was "universal suffrage," her besetting passion an unlimited desire of general admiration; the realms of her conquest, like the

views of the Spartan Agesilaus, knew no boundary. She was, indeed, a very pretty woman, with small but regular features, and with the most brilliant blue eyes, which she knew how to use with the greatest effect; her mouth was peculiarly beautiful, and her smile *spirituelle* to a degree; added to these advantages, there was a joyousness, a *gaieté de cœur*, about her, an unceasing cheerfulness of disposition, that communicated itself to all around. She could not live without the additional excitement of a few quarrels and *tracasseries* on hand. Adolphe de la Minauderie, her husband, possessed that self-sufficiency which rendered him the most favoured of Heaven's creatures, in his own eyes.

In early life, Madame la Baronne, née de Blaquièrē, had had a grand sentiment for the young Achille Rougemont, Capitaine du dixième régiment d'hussards; they had plighted their faith, and were about to be united, when the escape of "L'homme du siècle" opened a fresh

war with Europe. Achille took leave of his affianced, and they mutually vowed that, if death should overtake either, the other would offer up the self-sacrifice of life. The battle of Waterloo had numbered Achille Rougemont as one of its victims, he had fallen in a gallant charge; the news had reached Paris, and Mademoiselle de Blaqui  re remembered her vow. Determined to emulate the Hindoo widow, she formed a funeral pile, consisting of all Achille's billets-doux, and, approaching it with her pet, "Ch  ri," a young King Charles's spaniel he had presented to her, set fire to the pile. For some time she bore the trial with fortitude, but, alas, her resolution gave way before the scorching flames, and to the disgrace of sentiment be it recorded, the only immolated victim at the altar of love was the miserable quadruped. Another event had occurred to chequer her life, when aux Eaux. Two young German Counts, who aspired to her hand, accidentally encountered one another

at the residence of the fair de Blaquière. To settle their dispute rapier in hand would have committed the object of their devotion; they therefore determined to arrange the affair in a different manner. Two glasses of Johannisberg were provided, one containing a deadly poison; they drew lots, and pledged the health of the divine Eloïse. The survivor, however, of this rhenish duel was after all rejected by the lady.

Madame de la Minauderie had once been universally envied for her beauty, and even after her personal attractions had lost much of their early lustre, and of "the bloom of young desire, the purple light of love," the elegance of her taste, the fascination of her manners, the charm of her accomplishments, caused her still to shine as a brilliant star in the hemisphere of fashion.

Lady Atherley was at this time indulging through Madame de la Minauderie, in the luxury so baneful to all young married women, the dangerous pleasure of an unreserved co-

fidence in what is termed a bosom friend. The ruin of wedded happiness may too often be ascribed to such injudicious attachments or *attachées*. To what purpose can it conduce to discuss a husband's failings, or the vexations which may be casually endured from or through him, unless to irritate sensibilities, and keep the minds and tempers in a state of restlessness?

Ravensworth's conduct was too apparent to escape Madame de la Minauderie's observation; and Constance's tearful eyes evinced her own painful sense of it. Encouraged by the sympathy of her friend, she indiscreetly related every trifling incident which had occurred of a disagreeable nature. Instead of healing the wound a tender mind had suffered, La Baronne aggravated every trivial vexation into a real sorrow, and designated many venial errors and infirmities as wanton outrages and consummate cruelties. On one occasion, when the Baroness had gracefully *innuendoed* Dudley's

character away, and then sympathised with Constance's distress, Lady Atherley, overcome with the Iago-like art of her friend, flung herself upon her couch, pretending sleepiness, but in reality for the purpose of escaping the annoyance of that consolation which administered no relief. La Baronne insisted upon watching her slumbers, and positively refused to quit her chamber.

The faithful Viney, believing her Lady to be asleep, began a conversation in an audible whisper.

"What can be the matter, Ma'am, between my master and my lady? there's been such a *to do* lately."

"Hush!" said La Baronne, evidently desirous to hear more.

"Well! I always thought they would fall out — such hot love generally gets the soonest cold; they *do* say, in the servants' hall, that master is the greatest *Don Giovanni* in the world."

" Silence, silence ! your lady is awake ; she'll hear you."

" Oh no ! She's fast asleep," replied the persevering Abigail. " 'Tis a shocking thing, my Lady Baroness, that she should be so married. She's the sweetest, best-tempered creature in the world ; and he, the profligate wretch, has a nasty Frenchified *ma'am*—(them foreigners are no better than they should be, barring your Ladyship's presence). Shame upon him !"

" Poor creature," responded the Baroness.

" Poor creature, indeed, Madame ; her first husband, Lord Atherley, never let my lady have any peace — teaze, teaze, continually ; and now her second neglects her for a tawdry, painted, gawky opera-dancer, Mademoiselle St. Far, as they call her.

Lady Atherley's agony could no longer be suppressed ; she burst into a flood of tears ; but with the usual assistance of vinaigrettes and Eau de Cologne, soon recovered, when the Baroness departed, urging Constance to calm

herself, and carrying away with her the confirmation of Madame Anastasie's scandal, which furnished a world of excitement to this mischievous lady.

Ravensworth returned home; he heard of Constance's illness; her pale dejected countenance too plainly told him that she was neither in health nor happiness; he folded her in his arms, and besought her to tell him the cause of her anxiety; Constance assured him that there was none; but her averted eye and half-stifled sobs gave little confirmation to her words.

Lady Atherley and Ravensworth continued to behave towards each other with civility instead of tenderness, and with attention instead of confidence. The conversation Constance had overheard between Madame de la Minauderie and Mrs. Viney, cruelly dispossessed her mind of repose, and induced her thenceforth to view her husband's every action with jealous suspicion. Conscious of past severity, Dudley

endeavoured to conciliate his wife's affection, and their happiness soon assumed a more favourable appearance when this fair promise was interrupted by an unfortunate incident.

Lady Atherley was one morning reflecting in solitude over her destiny, when she was surprised by an early visit from Madame de la Minauderie. Ravensworth had just quitted her for the avowed purpose of going to a committee of the House of Commons.

"Bon jour, ma bonne amie," said La Baronne entering; "comment ça va-t-il ce matin?"

"Ça va bien," replied Constance; "et toi?"

"Très-bien, je te remercie, a thousand thanks for this friendly admission; it was rather unreasonable to expect to be let in at this early hour. J'ai tant de choses à te dire, j'ai besoin de ton goût, de tes conseils; mais ma chère Constance, qu'elle jolie toilette! un goût si exquis! une simplicité! tu es mise comme une ange."

All this time was the Baroness admiring herself in the glass over the chimney-piece.

"Y avait-il beaucoup
Glanville hier au soir

"Il y en avait trop,
de moins, et le bal au

Madame de la Mi
importance to consul
subject of a dress
take place the follow
Ambassador's. " It
remarked, " that I am
says, there is no p
it. Mais à propos

Darval, sais-tu, ma p

"Mr. Darval!" repre
is one of my husband

"Fais donc l'igno
ne le connais pas, n'e
Baroness in a tone of

"We often see M

"Il est plein d'esp

"My husband lik
said Lady Atherley,

"Original un peu, seulement."

"Some disappointment in early life," rejoined Lady Atherley, "has made Mr. Darval unhappy."

"Oh oui, je sais; ils sont tous comme cela, ces jeunes gens qui ont de beaux fronts pâles et de grands yeux noirs: à les entendre, leur cœur est un cimetière, où ils ont enterré toutes les joies et toutes les esperances de la vie," exclaimed the Baroness in a mock heroic style.

"Tu plaisantes, ma chère. But the time wears; I expect Ravensworth home soon from his committee."

The Baroness now besought Lady Atherley to accompany her to Madame Chamouillet, the French Marchande de Modes, where they might devise some becoming dress, and decide upon the important point, whether crape, silk, or satin should be chosen. They soon reached the temple of *ton*, situated in the very centre of a fashionable street in the most fashionable part of the metropolis.

The contents of the magasin were displayed, every carton was opened,—silks, satins, and crapes, but nothing suited; white was not mourning enough,—black too sombre,—grey unbecoming.

Madame Chamouillet and her daughter Eugénie, were indefatigable “dans leur métier.” “Voilà! my Lady, un corsage à la Psyché, tout-à-fait ravissant; voilà une robe, mille fois plus jolie que l'amour, qui fait les délices de tout Paris. Si my Lady veut entrer par ici elle verra tout ce qu'il y a de nouveau.—Mademoiselle Victorine, show the ladies the last new dresses from Paris.”

Lady Atherley and the Baroness entered the room. By one of those unaccountable freaks of fortune which none can understand, the former approached the table; but what an object presented itself to her eyes! an ashy paleness stole over her features, sudden, lightning-like conviction flashed on her mind; she

was horror-struck. La Baronne glanced towards the spot on which her eye had rested, "the damning proof" was before her; an order for a dress in the well-known handwriting of Ravensworth directed to be sent to Mademoiselle St. Phar. Every object swam before Constance's eyes as in a mist; every sound fell unheeded on her ear; one faint groan escaped her, and she staggered against the door, to which she clung for support: she was fainting, and would have fallen, but for the timely assistance of Mademoiselle Eugénie, who employed herself assiduously in bathing her temples with Eau de Cologne. When she recovered, and the first burst of anguish was over, she took La Baronne's arm and descended to the carriage. On reaching home, she took leave of Madame de la Minauderie, and sought the solitude of her own chamber.

"Alas!" she inwardly exclaimed, with that blindness of judgment by which we are all more or less influenced, and which throws

our misfortunes into the strongest light and our errors into the shade, "what have I done to merit this fate?" To doubt now was impossible; the wretched conviction had been sufficiently brought home to her. She had been deceived; the barbed sting of outraged affection rankled at her heart; the fabric of happiness she had once fondly believed secure had been annihilated: there wanted but this to withdraw from her all that had previously soothed her in her humiliation and sorrow. What consolation could now be offered to the heart thus thrown back upon itself, which, though hopeless, must still love; though condemning, could still adore; though "*broken,* could *brokenly live on?*" Constance knelt down and prayed;—her prayer was for patience, for direction, and support. This was the severest pang of all; and though she prayed long and fervently, she still wept like a child. Dark thoughts—gloomy and horrible visions—took possession of her mind; all around was

arid and barren. Deserted by all the bright hopes that once had thronged about her path, she felt that despair was her portion for the rest of her life, and that the world was now desolate for her. Humbled by the consciousness of the position which she held in society, she shrank from the gaze of strangers; she felt that every eye that rested on her was full of scorn or pity: she read contempt in many an indifferent look, and heard reproach in words which conveyed it to no other ear. All was dark and desolate; despair, sorrow, and remorse by turns struggled for the mastery, and with feelings wound up to the greatest degree of excitement by the shock that had wrecked her dearest hopes, she remained in a state bordering on madness. Hope could afford no solace, for the dreadful certainty which accompanied the discovery of her husband's violated fidelity, told her there was no remedy for the wretchedness which oppressed her. The tormenting and harassing reflection haunted every

thought. She felt that he for whom she had sacrificed everything in this world — he for whom only she had lived — had broken every tie of love, had blighted all her hopes, outraged her affections, and joined the herd of the world in shunning her for “having loved not wisely, but too well !”

The reviewal of the past month offered anything but pleasurable sensations to Ravensworth ; for although he had witnessed nothing that could justify any suspicion of Darval, the spirit that took possession of his mind bore a near affinity to jealousy. His heart misgave him when he thought of the numerous opportunities to which his neglect of Lady Atherley, and devotion to the St. Phar, had exposed her. He reflected on the seductive arts of Darval ; on the abstraction and lowness of spirits which Lady Atherley betrayed ; the agitated demeanour of Sidney on many occasions, his unceasing attentions ; the gentleness with which those attentions, too, were received — all gave

rise to the most uneasy sensations. Had Darval ever betrayed in his manner to Constance, or by any impassioned language, the familiarity and freedom so frequent yet so offensive in men, she would have shuddered and escaped from it. He never breathed a syllable to her that her husband might not have heard. The respect, at once so refined and flattering; the devotion, which converted her wishes into commands; the freedom from all gross adulation or flippant protestation, had gained her entire confidence.

Return we to this arch hypocrite;—return we to him.

Darval, bursting inwardly with mortification and anger at finding, after all the pains he had taken to entangle Constance's affection, that his power over her was not established,—his plan of revenge was speedily formed. Another motive urged him on:—jealousy, and hatred for Dudley, who had supplanted him with the St. Phar. In Madame de la Minau-

derie he had found a m
They knew that Lady A
with jealousy; anonymous
her of the power a cert
gained over her husband's
yond his most sanguine ho
to reward the Machiavelian
heard the affair at the millin
de la Minauderie, and had c
make inquiries after Lady A
Constance received him with a
barrassment, which he at onc
declaring that he had sought
the services of a respectful and
After a short silence he asked—

“ Does not Lady Atherley
prematurely a vague and di
picion to take possession of
mind? ”

But it would be long and tediou
the insidious arguments advanced
to confirm the sentiments of rega

had succeeded in exciting. His beguiling sophistry was received as the salutary counsel of one impelled by the tender anxiety of friendship. Bewildered by the weight of misery that pressed so heavily upon her, Constance at length replied with emotion :—

“ Can I want any other proof ? No, no ! ” she added, with tears in her eyes. “ All that remains for me is, to pray for patience to bear this affliction. Oh, for one true friend to whom I could unburthen my soul ! ”

“ Lady Atherley ! look, — call me but your friend ! ” replied Darval, in a more impassioned manner.

“ Be worthy of the title, and I will ever think of you as such.”

Lady Atherley wept bitterly. Darval sprang towards her, and, kneeling before her, took her struggling yet almost lifeless hand, and pressed it to his lips.

“ Why refuse to listen to me ? you *must* hear me ! ”

"Rise, Mr. Darval!" said Constance, recovering from her astonishment. At that moment the doors were suddenly thrown open, and Ravensworth, with a countenance of mingled horror and consternation, entered the room. Darval rose hastily from his knees, and confronted Dudley with an audacious stare. He at once assumed a self-sufficient air of mingled triumph and malice. A curse "not loud but deep," was on his lips. Indignation shot from the dark eyes of Ravensworth; there was a stinging rebuke in his look, which at once reduced Darval to silence. Rage seemed to impede his utterance.

"Leave me!" said Constance, recovering her senses.

"I obey *Lady Atherley's* commands!" said Darval, smiling bitterly; adding in a cutting tone, "Sir Dudley, for the present we part; when next we meet, I trust we shall not be subject to interruption."

Without giving time for a reply, he took his hat and left the room.

At first a sudden flush crimsoned Ravensworth's forehead and face, which was succeeded by a deadly paleness. At length he spoke,—but wildly; his lips quivered, his voice was hollow with emotion, and deep resentment clung to his heart. Constance marked the struggles of his mind, and trembled for the result. He stood up like a statue erected to horror !

Constance gazed on him with a calm air of dignity, mingled with a look of innocence, and with such an expression of imploring sweetness and guilelessness, that, had it not been for the evidence of his senses, he would have thrown himself at her feet, and implored her forgiveness for his unjust suspicions ! But the conviction of her treachery and guilt stifled every softer feeling within him. He gazed upon her beauty,—that beauty which had been so fatal to his and to her peace : he could hardly bring himself to believe (so alive are we to self-inju-

ries in love) that so angelic a face was the deceitful index of a betraying mind.

"Dudley!" said Constance, in a sad but calm voice,—“though appearances are against me, I am still your own Constance! As my words are truth, so help me Heaven!”

“Insolent, heartless scoundrel!” muttered Ravensworth. “Idiot that I was to admit him to my house! This is the climax!” he exclaimed, while, with frantic violence, he paced the room. He paused, and then retiring to his library, indulged in all the indignation with which his bosom laboured. He cursed the hour when honour, activity, and fame had been sacrificed for a worthless toy;—execrated the destroyer of his happiness; and, in a phrenzy of desperation,—his brain fired to madness,—looked forward with a savage joy to the hour which should be the last to one or both of them.

Then, in the agony of remorse, heart-struck

and miserable, he stood motionless,—his cheek was pale, his misery full, his desolation complete : with a haggard hope he sought to persuade himself that the “damning proof,” which had plunged him in wretchedness and despair was unreal ! But Darval, *on his knees*, pressing his wife’s hands with his lips!—the maddening conviction was established. The open consciousness of degradation,—the anguish of tormenting jealousy, or humiliation returned ; and Dudley sought a refuge from his feelings in a challenge to Darval. Within two hours, Ravensworth, attended by a friend, had set off for France.

CHAPTER XV.

DUEL—DEATH OF DUDLEY.

“ Last scene of all,
That ends this strange, eventful history.”

SHAKSPEARE.

IT was a beautiful afternoon in July, when a crowd of the principal residents in, and visitors to, that eminently respectable receptacle for English swindlers, Boulogne, was assembled upon the pier to enjoy their principal amusement, that of witnessing the arrival of the English Steam-boat. This favourite resort was crowded with a heterogeneous mass, English and French, male and female. *There* might be seen the Parisian *femme à la mode*. She puts forth no dazzling colours, her dress is of a material well chosen; on her feet a pair of Cinderella slippers, the sandal-strings crossing

a stocking of exquisite fineness; her cachmere folded in a manner of her own, to show the most perfect proportions of form; here and there, a specimen of the aristocracy of the old *régime*; with a few well-whiskered mustachioed personages of the present time. Mingled with these, were evident importations from the vicinity of Bow-Bells:—

“ Bagatelle from Clerkenwell,
Elegance from Aldgate,
Modish airs from Wapping Stairs,
And wit from Norton Falgate;
Comme-il-faut from Butcher Row,
All are in commotion;
All incline, like deviled swine,
To nuzzle through the ocean.”

Groups of our own countrymen and women might be seen, with their offspring, in twos and twos, dressed in tartan cloaks, straw-bonnets, and green veils, making loud remarks on the absurdities of the French children, whom the vanity of their mothers had sent abroad in fantastic dresses; little fellows trundling

hoops in the full uniform of the National Guard, others waddling under the mimicry of Don Cossacks, Polish Lancers, and kilted Highlanders. Dissipated-looking free-born sons of Britain, exiled for certain unpaid liabilities, black-balled in every society, just white-washed in England, and about to enjoy lodgings gratis in the Hôtel D'Angleterre, (as the debtors' prison is not inappropriately denominated,) are prevalent.

One group, on the evening alluded to, attracted some little attention : it consisted of a portly, red-faced, little man, with a tall, scraggy lady ; both were jostling the crowd, and trying to make their way towards a most formal-looking personage, who was evidently straining her neck to give them the cut direct. They approached — “Lady Margaret, I sincerely hope,”—Lady Margaret looked surprised ; “your Ladyship, I fear, forgets Dr. Boyle,—Doctor Boyle of Rathborough ; I have had the honour of attending,

I mean visiting the Countess of Atherley; hope her Ladyship is well. Ah, Sir Alexander! happy to see you looking so well." Lady Margaret gave a stiff curtsey, and was about to move, when the Doctor continued, " Pray allow me to have the honour of presenting Mrs. Boyle; my dear,—Lady Margaret Graham:—Lady Margaret Graham, Mrs. Doctor Boyle." A formal curtseying ensued.

" I have often heard of your Ladyship," said Mrs. Boyle, " and am proud—"

The smoke of a steam-packet was now perceived in the distance, seaward; and a rush to the pier-head put an end to this conversation; shortly after the vessel hove in sight, and glided rapidly over " the glad waters of the dark blue sea :"—at length it came alongside the pier. Every neck was elongated, every eye was dilated, to examine the specimens of smuggled humanity about to be landed; then came all the bustle and annoyances of a dis-

embarkation ; Mathews's song was fully illustrated :

“ Can't touch prog, sick as a dog ;
Packetem racketem makes pier ;
Boulogne clerks, custom-house sharks,
Searchery, lurchery, fee fee.”

It is surprising with what avidity the inmates of watering-places seek that most uninteresting sight—a landing ; to see young and old ladies, sick and squeamish, “ whose souls *have sickened* o'er the heaving wave ;” then to witness the hopes and fears, the nervousness of passing the custom-house, knowing that contraband articles are hid in bonnets, bustles, boots, muffs—nay, sometimes so concealed as to give the appearance of being in that state “ which women wish to be who love their lords.”

“ Why, my Lady — Lady Margaret Graham !” exclaimed Dr. Boyle, “ I declare it is —no it an't — yes it is ; it 's very like Sir Dudley Ravensworth.”

Lady Margaret turned round, addressed a few words to Sir Alexander, and left the pier. — And it was Dudley Ravensworth, evidently flushed and excited : he was accompanied by a military-looking man. After some little delay they landed ; no sooner had Sir Dudley put his foot upon the pier than he was kindly accosted by his old antipathy, the Rat-borough Galen. Time and matrimony had done much for Dr. Boyle ; and his warm-hearted offer of any assistance,—for he evidently saw that Ravensworth was “a little dashed”—was received in the same spirit in which it was offered.

The Doctor’s presence brought back most vividly and painfully to Dudley’s mind scenes of the past. “My dear,” said the Doctor, addressing his *sposa*, “I have a little business; professional, my dear,” laying a stress on the word professional, as he saw the lady tried to extract a pout from her shrivelled lips; “pray

remain with your friends the Manbeys until the French steamer arrives; it was to leave Dover an hour after the Britannia; perhaps I shall be able to induce Sir Dudley to drop in to tea: *au revoir.*"

Accompanied by the Doctor, and a gentleman whom Ravensworth introduced as Captain Somerville, they walked towards the end of the pier, where they found the worthy M.D.'s jaunting-car, the identical one mentioned in a former chapter, and in it proceeded to the Doctor's residence in the upper town. There Ravensworth entered briefly into the affair that had brought him to Boulogne, and wrote a letter to Constance, which the Doctor promised to deliver if necessary. At five o'clock the party were seen wending their way towards the Column. The last scene of this earthly tragedy was approaching. The French steamer had arrived, and scarcely had it touched the pier when a female rushed on

deck ; to disembark was the work of a moment : her wild and distracted look, her hurried step, attracted the sympathy and attention of all, and amongst others of the Doctor's wife, who immediately recognised her as Lady Atherley. Mrs. Boyle approached, and, kindly addressing her, informed her that Sir Dudley had just accompanied her husband home. On reaching the Doctor's residence they met the car returning. In reply to the inquiry after them, "I left them near the Column," struck Constance with dread. They entered the carriage. Lady Atherley only reached the fatal spot to find the duel she apprehended already fought, and Ravensworth writhing under the agony of a mortal wound.—What pen can describe this scene ? The wretched Constance, "who had given her peace on earth, her hopes of heaven," for *him*, was in convulsions by his side. She protested her innocence, and a faint smile beamed on Dudley's countenance. In the

paroxysms of despair she threw herself upon the now inanimate body, kissed its cold forehead, and pressed fervently the marble hands to her lips ; her cheek was colourless, her lips compressed, her eye dull, fixed, and unmisted by a tear,—for hers was grief which could not relieve itself by weeping. Utter hopelessness had laid its icy hand upon her heart, had paralysed its springs ; a dizziness came over her, and sight, sense, feeling,—all were gone. Assisted by the kind-hearted Doctor, the widowed Constance was removed to the Convent des Sœurs de la Charité.

Lady Margaret and Sir Alexander had been sent for, and, after delivering a suitable homily on the enormity of duelling, and the scandal the affair would produce, sought their daughter. The sight of Lady Margaret, in some measure, recalled Constance to herself; her first burst of grief was terrible. In the extremity of misery the virtuous have one con-

solation ; derived from the consciousness that their sufferings are not produced by their own deeds. Constance could not " lay this flattering unction to her soul," for *one* fatal remembrance had thrown " its bleak shade alike o'er her joys and her woes." The struggle was too much for her, her soul received a blight from which it never recovered ; a fever, accompanied by delirium, was the consequence of the shock she had received ; it shook her reason ; her once beautiful mind had flown. We throw a veil over her sufferings : weakened by her mental and bodily pangs, she would fall into an involuntary doze—her dreams were peopled with terrible phantoms ; now whispering at intervals—" Dudley I am innocent!" now lost in utter apathy ! For some days she continued in this dreadful state ; at length nature gave way. On the tenth evening her sighs became thick and suffocating, then lighter and more faint :—the once beautiful Constance was no more.

There now remains little to be said; we cannot, however, conclude without giving our readers such information as we possess of the characters that have appeared in our pages. Lady Margaret Graham did not long outlive her daughter; would that we could add "grief had hurried her to a premature grave;" but truth compels us to say she was carried off by one of those very common and numerous "ills that flesh is heir to." Sir Alexander lived on to a green old age. Darval's career of vice flourished for some years; eventually, in a fit of desperation, after a severe loss at play, he fell by his own hand. Miss Cressingham may to this day be seen at one of the neatest suburban villas near Leamington, a happy, contented spinster, with "a hand open as day to melting charity," dispensing good to all around. Miss St. Leger retired to Bath, where for some years she enjoyed "single wretchedness," living by "murdering characters just to kill time;"

finally, the disappointed old maid ran away with a German Count, who turned out to be a fortune-hunter. Madame la Baronne de la Minauderie fell a victim in her old age to that devouring flame she had escaped from in her early days : having taken an extra quantity of opium to prepare herself for a fancy-ball, she fell asleep, and her dress catching fire she was found by her maid, who came to announce that the carriage was ready, a blackened corpse. The Dunbars still reside at Avesford Priory, and at Christmas the gentle *Mawia* entertains her guests with an account of the far-famed private theatricals, and the temporary theatre is still occasionally devoted to *tableaux vivans*, and charades. Charley Cyril, the hoaxter, has turned country-gentleman; and who, to see him now in a black velveteen shooting-jacket, railway pattern trowsers, and gaiter *termini*, could recognise the smart, dashing ex-hussar ! He still enjoys a joke, and glories in the recital of

his “ hair-breadth escapes ;” and it is shrewdly suspected that when, upon a late occasion, during a contested election, some half dozen voters were shipped off to Scotland, our friend was at least the “ putter-up ” of the joke. Tom Fauconberg, the slasher, fell a victim to his temerity in “ larking ” at a tiger-hunt in India, in which he only lost his head.

Sir John and Lady Biddlecombe live principally at Bath ; they made a point of visiting Edinburgh during the period that Charles Dix found a refuge in Holyrood, and have talked of nothing but the “ illustrious family ” ever since.

The Honourable Augustus Priddie, equally horrified and shocked on hearing from Harry Bibury, in his own peculiar phraseology, that Brummel “ had cut his stick, — had made his name Walker,” — followed the exiled monarch to Calais. Harry himself got deep upon the turf, and became a

Levanter after the Derby, (having "*let in*" our friend Harry Wright for two hundred pounds,) and for some years figured as the leading "leg" at the Brussels' races. He was finally run through the body by a French adventurer, in consequence of a dispute at a game of Ecarté. Experience made Harry Wright wise; he gave up betting, by perseverance recovered his losses, and is now "well to do" in a leading hotel at the west end of London. Hampden Stubbs, Esq., M.P. (for at the passing of the Reform Bill his labours in three contested elections were rewarded by a seat,) died on his voyage to Madeira, whither he was proceeding for the recovery of his health, having broken a blood-vessel in an harangue at the Crown and Anchor against the emancipation of the negroes; the public-spirited patriot possessing property at Barbadoes to some extent. Mr. Grindlaw, after twelve years' labour in the cause of

liberty, was rewarded by his political friends with a post of great honour but little emolument in Sierra Leone, where he speedily fell a victim, partly to the climate, and partly to an asthma brought on by a too energetic eloquence in parish matters.

Lady Cheetham, who, according to Priddie's last, received the sobriquet of the Thames Tunnel, from being unquestionably the greatest *bore* in London, may still be seen occasionally in a pit-box at the opera before Easter; it being, according to the aforesaid jocose authority, the *Lent* season with her and the booksellers. While on the subject of the heroine of water parties, we must not forget the West Smithfield Loan Society—Mr. Julius Pewtress, jun., of Poppin's Court, the worthy deputy's elder son, has “*popped* the question” to his cousin, Miss Matilda Julia Sparling, and been accepted. On the day of their nuptials her uncle, the worthy pawnbroker, “redeemed,”

as he jocosely observed, his numerous *pledges*, by abdicating in their favour.

Of the minor characters we need only give a brief notice. Messieurs Gribble and Cocksedge lived to witness the introduction of that admirable force, the New Police, the value of which even they had the candour and generosity to admit.—(Gribble loquitur); “Them new p’lice are out-and-outers, riglar trumps, as to *perversion*; though as setters (*id est*, persons using the haunts of thieves in order to give information), they are tyros, flats; and, s’help me Bob! for pitching a bit of gammon, for sucking the brains of a flat, or for soaping him down for a split on his pals, they’re not to be compared to the Bow Street ‘thorities.”

Mr. Gribble is now governor of a rural penitentiary, where he superintends his peculiar grinding mill, and the picking of oakum and hemp. And Mr. Cocksedge having been

fortunate enough (through the agency of an accomplice who peached) to receive a considerable reward for the recovery of a large quantity of stolen property, has embarked it all in the wine and spirit line, and has become the mighty monarch of a gin palace. So great a predilection has the ex-Bow-street runner for John Bullism, that everything in his establishment, down even to the brandy, is British.

Mr. Beverley Gagen rose considerably by the decline and fall of the British drama, as a jackal to the depraved taste of the lion-hunting public; he became the fortunate possessor of a lion and lioness; and having introduced them at one of the legitimate theatres in the metropolis, in a drama of his own construction, realised a large sum, and subsequently "*starred*" with them in the provinces, with the greatest success and roars of approbation. An unforeseen "animal accident" unfortunately deprived him of his two

children. Mr. and Mrs. Fitz-Annandale's names may still be seen blazoned forth in large red letters in provincial towns

"As *stars* fresh added to the skies."

Their only son, the infant prodigy, Master Alexis Fitz-Annandale, would doubtless have proved himself "a chip of the old block," but unfortunately, when attitudinising in a mythological ballet, as Cupid, the wires broke, and the precocious god of love dislocated his ankle; since that period he has descended to that most useful personage, a call boy.

Last not least, Doctor and Mrs. Boyle quitted Boulogne for London soon after the fatal event we have recorded, in consequence of the serious illness of an uncle, just returned from India, who was anxious for his niece's attendance. After a month of suffering Mr. Marsland died, bequeathing a tolerably large fortune to his niece, Mrs. Boyle. The Doctor

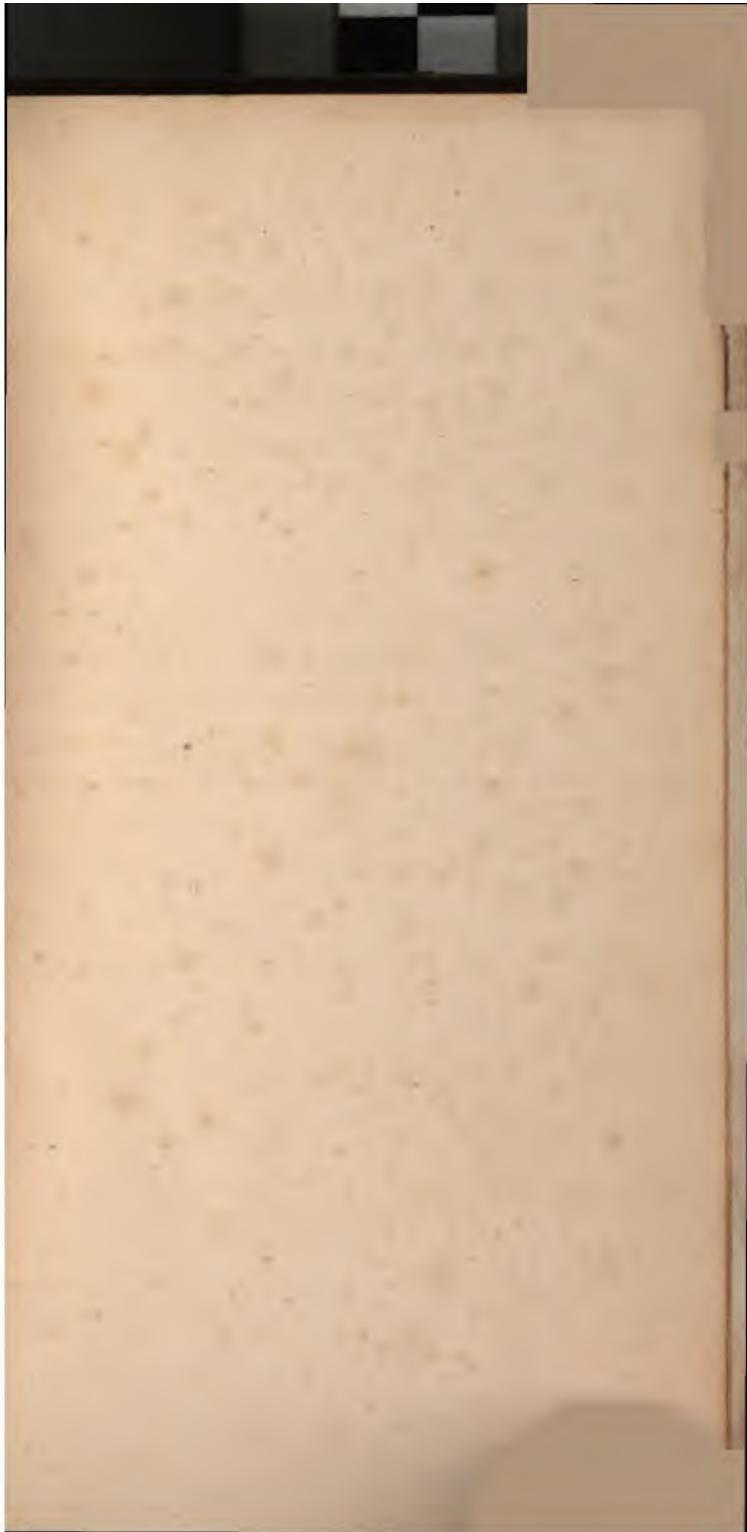
was anxious to return to his native town; and, hearing that the Pagoda was for sale, commissioned our old acquaintance Mr. Hood to purchase it. This was speedily accomplished: fortunately the house required considerable repair, and Mrs. Boyle's good taste suggested the removal of the pagoda and aviary; the house was restored to its primitive state, a good substantial town-like residence. The greatest hospitality is kept up at "Marsland," so the property has, in compliment to Mrs. Boyle's relation, been named. The Doctor keeps his wife's and his own birthdays, the anniversaries of his marriage, and of the day he came into the possession of Marsland. "*Bonum vinum laetificat cor hominis,*" is his motto; and if on those occasions the worthy M.D. would not in our days have ranked as a disciple of Father Mathew, some allowance may be made, for, according to the Doctor's saying, "*It's a poor heart that never rejoices.*"

At Lord Atherley's death many distant relations came forth as claimants for his estates; the property was thrown into Chancery; the newspapers teemed with reports, as to how a learned counsel opened on one side, and how another replied; and after decree, and reference to the Master, rehearings on further directions and appeals, exceptions, and reversals of decisions, &c., despite the new impetus that has been given to Chancery suits, the Keeper of the Queen's conscience still keeps an *equitable* eye and hand upon the property; nor is it easy to perceive the eventual appropriation of

COMPTON AUDLEY.

THE END.

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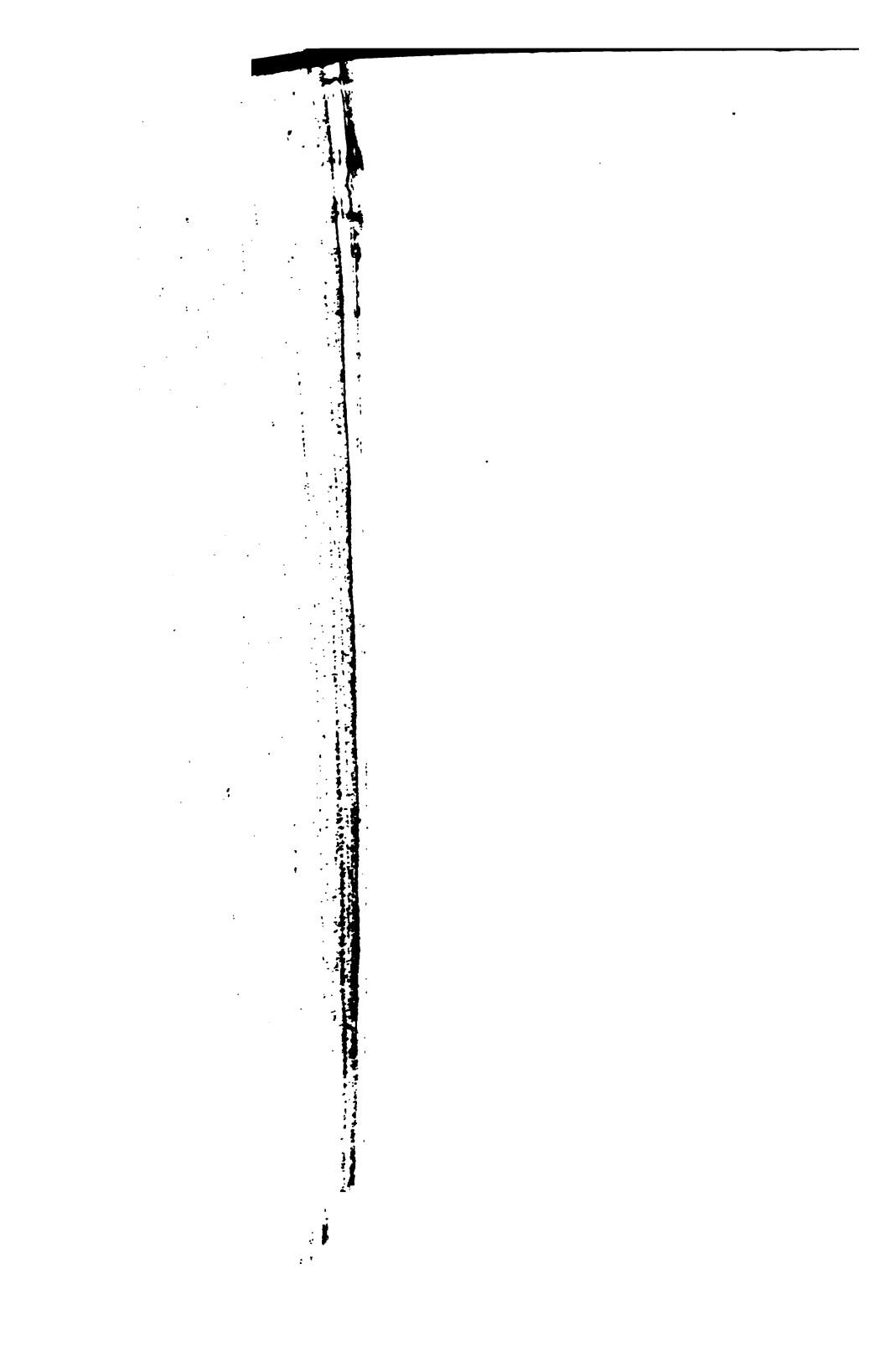


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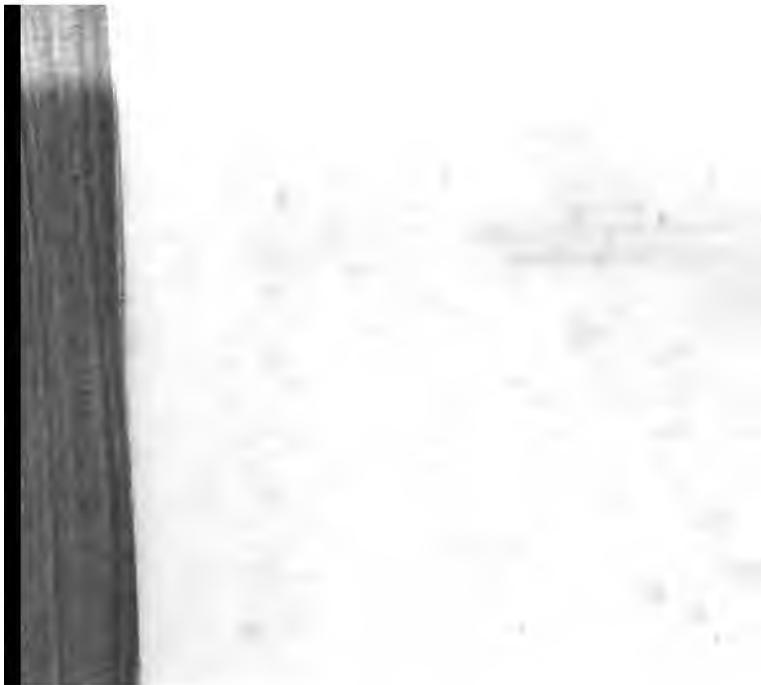




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